

Alumni of the Theological Seminary,

PRINCETON, N. J.

*Presented by Rev. J. C. Bachman, D. D., LL. D.,
Baltimore, Md.*

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Home evangelization

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S. H. Smith

HOME EVANGELIZATION.

BY THE

REV. WILLIAM HUTCHESON,

MINISTER OF THE FREE CHURCH, JOHNSTONE.

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DEDICATION.

TO

WILLIAM MACFIE, ESQ.
OF LANGHOUSE.

DEAR SIR,

God, from whom cometh down “every good and every perfect gift,” hath been pleased, not only to give you riches, but what is far more valuable, a heart to use them for the promotion of his glory.

In every object which concerns the welfare of the human family, and by means of which the divine glory is promoted, you take a deep interest, as is evinced by your munificent contributions to charitable, educational, and religious purposes. To the Church of our fathers, during the recent season of sore trial, when large funds were needed to upbuild her walls, and to make provision for her stated supply of ordinances, in accordance with the directions of her great Head, you particularly displayed an enlightened liberality which justly entitles you to the lasting gratitude of her members. Your munificence still continues to flow for the maintenance of all the institutions of our beloved Zion, and for the mental

and moral improvement of the nation at large; and that, too, so spontaneously and so unostentatiously, as greatly to enhance your donations.

Always ready to distribute and willing to communicate, you, at the same time, maintain that consistent deportment which throws an attractive lustre around your beneficent deeds, and serves to recommend religion to those among whom you dwell. If the generality who occupy influential stations manifested your spirit and generosity, there is reason to believe that the Church of Christ within these realms would soon be enabled to arise and take possession of the whole land.

It is on these grounds I dedicate to you this little Work; my sincere regret being, that it is so unworthy of the subject, and of your regards.

Praying that you may long be spared to advance the cause of truth and righteousness, to adorn your Christian profession, and to enjoy the respect of a grateful community,

I am,

DEAR SIR,

Yours, with unfeigned esteem,

WILLIAM HUTCHESON.

P R E F A C E.

LAST year I delivered a series of Monthly Lectures to the inhabitants of Johnstone on Home Evangelization ; the substance of which is here published.

The chief reason which induced me to prepare them for the press was, that notwithstanding the great importance of the subject of which they treat, both to the nation itself, and to the world generally, there is not, so far as I know, any full, comprehensive work on Home Missions, similar to those works we have on Foreign Missions. Judging that the present Volume might temporarily supply this great want, till something better may appear from an abler pen, and that it might thereby be instrumental in helping forward the Christianization of the kingdom, I have ventured on its publication.

Necessarily touching on many controverted points at present stirring the public mind, and upon which men are greatly divided, it would be presumptuous in me to expect that all the remedial measures recommended should meet with universal approval. Prepared for

connected and compendious form, a faithful and diversified summary of facts on the several topics of “spiritual destitution and remedial measures, hindrances and encouragements, motives and examples.” Plain and unpretending in its style, it is yet characterized by a certain neatness and distinctness of expression; so that, while it is level to the comprehension of ordinary minds, it is not without attraction to readers of a higher order. Calm and didactic in its general strain of discussion, it is nevertheless interspersed with occasional appeals, indicative not merely of sincerity, but of great moral earnestness. Rich in materials of an eminently suggestive character, it uniformly aims at merging the speculative into the practical and the useful. While, in the exposition of remedial measures, and the enforcement of motives, the author places conspicuously in the foreground those that are evangelic and divine in their origin and power, he does well in not overlooking such as are of a humbler and more secular, yet influentially auxiliary cast. In all his views and statements, he does not, and cannot, expect the general, far less universal, concurrence of his readers. In some of his suggestions, he may be over-sanguine as to their applicability and success, and in others, over-catholic for an age of antagonist and immiscible sectarianisms. But whatever exceptions may be taken to particular parts, his views and statements will, I doubt not, in the main, or considered in the aggregate, command, to a large extent, the approbation of the candid, intelligent, and godly, who “sigh and cry over the abominations” that deface our beloved fatherland. If at times he appears too exclusive in his advocacy, it must be remembered that “home evangelization” is the alone theme which he undertakes to plead; and in the existing state of our knowledge on the subject, his work seems fairly entitled to rank as “THE HAND-BOOK OF HOME MISSIONS.”

With these few hurried and imperfect remarks, I return the volume with many thanks.

Yours, very sincerely,

ALEXANDER DUFF.

Messrs JOHNSTONE AND HUNTER.

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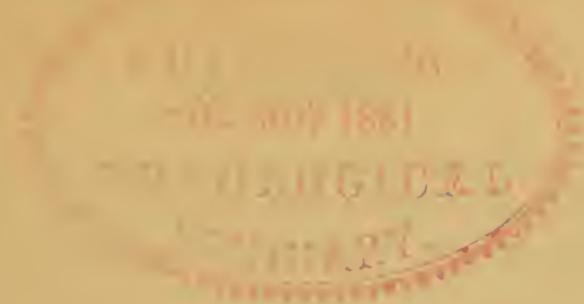
ERRATA.

Page 34 line 32, *For summonses* *read* summonses.

„ 117 „ 28, „ Is zeal „ Are zeal.

„ 169 „ 6, „ There are „ These are

„ 52 „ 16, The word “things” should be expunged.



INTRODUCTORY.

GREAT BRITAIN holds a distinguished place among existing nations. Socially, commercially, politically, intellectually, morally, and religiously, it is unrivalled —being at once the envy and admiration of every land. Other countries may carry off the palm as to richness of soil, salubrity of climate, sublimity of scenery, variety of natural productions, and amount of population; but, in all that is essential to national greatness and national happiness, this sea-girt isle is confessedly unequalled. It is a gem in the midst of the ocean, whose beauty and brilliancy have attracted visitors from every quarter of the globe, and on which the eye alike of the philosopher and the philanthropist delights to rest.

Both town and country exhibit evidences of taste, comfort, and respectability. Visit any British city, and you behold stately mansions vying with each other in gorgeous magnificence; and spacious streets, mainly composed of elegant shops and warehouses, filled with every variety of home and foreign produce; and crowds of people, all busy and bustling, and apparently happy and contented. Go through the rural parts of our fatherland, and you see, on this side, the palatial residence, with its large encircling domain—and on that side, the thriving village, and the comfortable dwelling-house; now you gaze on luxuriant crops, waving wood-lands, and tidy cottages—and now on workmen

of every craft prosecuting their labours diligently and cheerfully. These are gratifying sights, and indicative of no small amount of plenty, contentment, and enjoyment.

Look, next, at the commercial and political eminence of Britain. By the ingenious inventions of her scientific sons, and the enterprise of her princely merchants, she is enabled to manufacture every article of luxury and convenience on such a scale of unparalleled magnitude, as not only to supply them in abundance to her own teeming population, but also to myriads in all parts of the world. Her varied and costly exports enable her, on a scale no less magnificent, to import the produce of every foreign clime. This extended commerce has increased her wealth, enhanced her political importance, and conduced to her maritime greatness. Her navy rides triumphant on every sea, her sceptre stretches over both hemispheres, her name is respected in every country, her language is spoken in every kingdom. The haughtiest monarch dare not insult her flag, the strongest government is proud of her alliance, and all unite in paying her homage.

The intellectual greatness of our native land is also of a high order. Learning seems to thrive in the British soil, like an indigenous plant. Science and philosophy early appeared among us, and have been prosecuted with no ordinary enthusiasm and success. If one nation outstrip us in bold and reckless metaphysical speculation, and if another outvie us in some particular department of scientific research, yet, for profound reach of thought, sublimity of imagination, and soundness of judgment, England and Scotland have never, we venture to say, been surpassed. Some

of the brightest names of literature and science adorn their annals. Newton and Locke, Milton and Johnson, Bacon and Butler, are a few of those literary luminaries, which sparkle on the pages of British history, and which invite comparison with the savans of continental kingdoms. And, were it necessary, we might name, not hundreds, but thousands, now dwelling around us, whose talents and attainments, besides maintaining our renown in the republic of letters, are fostering an enthusiastic love of knowledge, which is destined to go on increasing, till it has reached the lowest depths of the populace, and raised the peasant mentally to an equality with the prince.

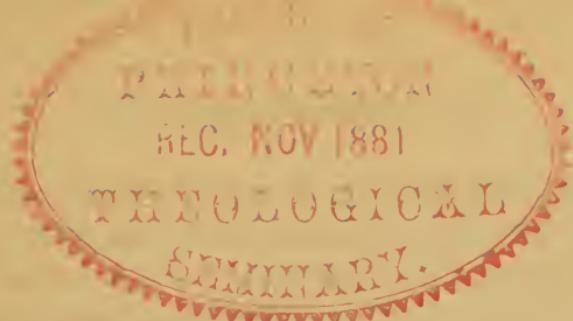
But Great Britain is still more pre-eminent for her moral and religious standing, than for her commercial greatness, her political importance, and her literary fame. Early catching the spirit of the Reformation, she cast off the Papal yoke, which fettered her spiritual energies, and embraced that system of truth which can alone truly elevate the nation and the individual. As, however, the Reformation, in her southern division, was for a while chiefly carried on by an unprincipled monarch for selfish ends, while in her northern it was conducted by the people themselves, headed by a noble band of enlightened and devoted clergymen and laymen, who had largely imbibed its spirit, and who were guided solely by the Bible in all their movements; as this great work was thus variously prosecuted in the different parts of the island, it was, as may easily be believed, more scriptural and more complete in the north than in the south. Nevertheless, the nation, upon the whole, is Protestant, possessing many interesting reminiscences of its Protestantism, and sending forth

to this hour the sweet savour of many godly and gifted men, who toiled and suffered for the obtainment of the valuable privileges we inherit, and which we regard as our noblest patrimony. Yes, Britain is the birthplace of Wickliffe and Knox, Melville and Henderson, Cranmer and Ridley, Howe and Hall, and many other renowned worthies on both sides of the Tweed, whose names will be held in everlasting remembrance, and the very mention of which serves to stir the dying embers of our piety and to incite us to holy and heavenly deeds. To this hour we are incalculably benefited by the religious liberty which these sainted and patriotic men so nobly achieved, and also by the doctrines they so clearly stated and so ably defended. We live in a land where liberty of conscience is generally respected, where the ordinances of our holy religion are every where dispensed, and where rare opportunities of religious improvement are enjoyed. Those really desirous to lead a godly life may have their desire gratified; those panting after the living waters may quench their thirst unmolested at the wells of salvation that so plentifully abound. Consequently, many assume the Christian name, and frequent the place where prayer is wont to be made, some of whom are in every respect consistent followers of the Lamb. Not a few even who can scarcely be said to make a profession of religion yet feel its reflex influence, and are thereby restrained from outraging society by shameless profligacy; so that, speaking in general terms, and comparing this country with others, we may call ourselves a moral and a religious people. And it is to our little leaven of Christianity, and to its effect on the public mind and character, that we are principally indebted for our civil liberty, our glorious constitution, and our national gran-

deur. It is likewise to our social condition, the result of what religion we possess, that we owe the stability of our institutions, and our present tranquillity, when continental Europe is rocking beneath the feet of its inhabitants, causing ancient dynasties to totter and fall, and overturning and engulfing the customs and usages of bygone ages.

This is the exterior of the picture, and it is so beautiful and pleasing that one feels proud to stand on British ground and to reflect that he is a Briton. O yes, when we think of the intelligence, the resources, the morality, and the piety of this mighty nation; when we see it over-topping all others, spreading its ample shield over vast colonial possessions, sitting at comparative ease in this season of universal commotion, and diffusing by its zealous missionaries the light of the gospel throughout every region; when we take a panoramic view of these items of its greatness, emotions of pride and exultation arise in our souls, which it requires some self-denial to repress. But, alas! this highly favoured land has blemishes of no ordinary magnitude, which stand out in bold relief—blemishes, which disfigure its beauty, paralyse its energies, and flush the cheeks of its warmest admirers. As may be perceived, we speak of its moral obliquities. On looking at these, intermixed with so much that is fair, and lovely, and attractive, we cannot help comparing our fatherland to one of those new-fashioned cemeteries which are every where being constructed, and which are fast superseding the old and sombre churchyards where sleeps the dust of past generations. Passing through one of these, with its winding walks, its flowering shrubs, and its tasteful columns, we are delighted, yea, enchanted, and begin

shift.
to fancy we have entered some lordly demesne; but, on pausing and looking around, we soon perceive that we walk among the dead, and that the very decorations of the place tell their own melancholy tale. Does not this bear a close resemblance to the land of our fathers, with its beautiful external appearance, and its internal moral putridity? It requires, indeed, but a slight acquaintance with this country to discover that there is more show than substance, more pretence than reality in its religion—that beneath a thin superficies of virtue and happiness there is a thick, impenetrable substratum of iniquity and wretchedness. With reference to so grave a matter, we propose mainly to direct attention to what is too glaring to be disputed, and too monstrous to be allowed to remain undisturbed. In other words, we are chiefly to speak of the spiritual destitution existing within our borders, together with its causes and remedies, and all the collateral branches of such a weighty theme; we are to fix the eye on those masses of our countrymen who are as irreligious and immoral as though they lived in the darkest land of benighted heathendom, and to point out the means that should be employed in effecting their recovery, as also the motives that should constrain all Christian Britons to devote themselves to their evangelization.



CHAPTER I

THE SPIRITUAL DESTITUTION OF BRITAIN.

“Seest thou not what they do in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem?”—JER. vii. 17.

By the spiritual destitution of our land, we mean the neglect of divine ordinances that prevails, together with the irreligion, immorality, and impiety therewith connected. This being its signification in these pages, the spiritually destitute must denote those who make no visible profession of religion, and who, as far as may be judged from their conduct, are utterly devoid of its power.

Owing to a deficiency of accurate ecclesiastical and moral statistics, the exact amount of prevailing spiritual destitution cannot be ascertained. While this is to be regretted, yet from statistical information of various kinds which has of late been laid before the public, together with private communications with which we have been favoured, we venture to think we may make an approximation to truth on the subject. We would farther premise, that the outstanding ungodliness of the country, which on all hands is allowed to be great, increases in bulk proportionably to the care with which it is investigated. The more closely and carefully it is examined, the wider and deeper does it appear. Like the large river in the distance, which looks as if it were

an insignificant stream that could be leapt over or waded through, but whose width and depth as it is neared stand forth in their real magnitude, so it is with the current of moral corruption which is now flowing wide and deep through this land of gospel light and liberty.

The extent of spiritual destitution may be inferred from the prevailing educational destitution, and the ignorance thereby engendered.—Scotland, in the days of our forefathers, was an educated country; but, alas! in our day and generation, it has sadly fallen from its repute for general intelligence. Although some educationists undoubtedly underrate the educational condition of the northern part of Great Britain, yet there cannot be a doubt but that it is lamentably deficient as to education. We lately saw it stated, that the number of children in Glasgow in 1846, above 6 and under 16 years of age, was 47,383. Of these, there were at school 21,674, and not at school 25,709. Out of the last mentioned number, there were 9,430 who could not read.* It thus appears, that in 1846 one-fifth of the youth of Glasgow were totally uneducated, while evidently a vast proportion of the remainder were but very imperfectly instructed. If only 21,000 were at school out of 47,000, who should have been in close attendance upon it, the education of the majority, apart altogether from the quality of the teaching, must have been exceedingly defective. In 1846, the population of the western Scottish capital was about 300,000, so that only 1 in 14 of the entire inhabitants were under tuition, whereas if education had been in a healthy state, there ought to have been 1 in 6. Considering the size of this large and rapidly increasing town, and the nature of its population, it would

* *North British Mail*, Jan. 8, 1849.

be unfair to fix upon it as an average specimen of the educational state of the whole of Scotland. From any school statistics, however, that we have seen, it might be selected for the generality of the mining and manufacturing districts of North Britain. In 1841, in the parish of St David's, Dundee, the proportion of scholars to the population was only 1 in 13. In some of the country parishes, it is true, the proportion of those attending school is even lower, but in most it is considerably higher; so that, over the whole of Scotland, there is perhaps about a ninth of the population receiving instruction. This is confirmed by statistics recently published by the Established Church, in which we find it stated that there are 1950 schools in connection with that church, and that, besides, there are 626 connected with the Free Church, and 78 belonging to other denominations, together with 2,388 adventure schools, making a total of 5,042 schools. Assuming these statistics to be correct, and supposing that the average attendance at each school is 65, which is a sufficiently large average, there will be 327,730 children under tuition. Now, as the population of the whole land closely borders on 3,000,000, there is thus only about 1 in 9 of the entire community attending school, whereas, if education was as it should be—that is, if all between 5 and 15 years of age had justice done them—there would be 1 in 6. In other words, instead of 327,730 being under instruction, there would be 500,000; so that 172,670 are *apparently* receiving no education. We say apparently, as it is erroneous to infer that all who are not at school between 5 and 15 are *wholly* uneducated. Any such inference is unsound, as many attend school at irregular intervals between 5 and

15, and as many even leave it at 10 and 12 years of age, and even much earlier. Although, then, there are only about 300,000 attending school in North Britain out of 500,000 youth, who should be attending it, we are not to infer that the rest receive no elementary instruction whatever. While we guard against this unwarrantable conclusion, it is evident that the number of uneducated children in the land of Knox, where education was once universal, must be immense, perhaps not much under 100,000, or one-fifth of the whole. But are the other four-fifths educated? When only two-thirds of the Scottish youth who should be at school are in attendance upon it, this shows at a glance the defective nature of the education which great numbers are receiving. Again, many of them are at school only for a very limited period, while others attend so irregularly, as to render any thing like education impossible. But, apart from these things, the *quality* of the education imparted in many of our elementary schools, does not deserve to be dignified with the name of education. Not a few assume the office of teacher who would need to be instructed themselves, and whose pupils would not be highly educated although they carried away the whole stock their masters possessed. This mainly arises from the want of encouragement which schoolmasters have hitherto received, compelling those who had the requisite qualifications to seek some more remunerative employment. Better times, however, are in store both for teachers and taught.

England is even lower in the scale of education than Scotland. In the Report of the British and Foreign Bible Society for 1833, it is mentioned, that in the metropolis alone 150,000, or about one-half of all the children, are

growing up uneducated. In addition to this vast number, there are 600,000 throughout the provinces who are in the same neglected condition ; so that the gross total of the untaught mass in England and Wales is 750,000. Besides this almost incredible number of youth who are being allowed to grow up to manhood totally uninstructed in the southern part of the island, there are fully more who are very imperfectly educated, owing partly to the short time they continue at school, and partly to the inefficiency of the teaching to which they are subjected.* Even yet, although great improvements have taken place, and although creditable exertions are being made by many clergymen and laymen to improve the quality of education, the provincial primary schools that are efficiently taught are the exception, not the rule.

Education in both North and South Britain being so defective, many adults must of necessity be lamentably ignorant. Facts establish this beyond all controversy. In the 143 Highland parishes, out of 500,000 there are 83,000 who cannot read, and there are 250,000 who cannot write.† From a canvass lately instituted by the committee of the Herefordshire Auxiliary Bible Society, it appears that out of 41,017 individuals visited, only 24,222, or little more than one-half, were able to read.‡ Without multiplying such minute statistical details, let it suffice to mention, what is commonly affirmed and commonly believed, that in Great Britain there are in round numbers 5,000,000 who cannot read, and 8,000,000 who cannot write. Now, if somewhere about a third

* See "Perils of the Nation," p. 205.

† From Mr Colquhoun's statements in Parliament, respecting education in Scotland.

‡ "Report of the British and Foreign Bible Society."

of the whole youth of this realm are all but uneducated, and if one-fourth of the adult males and females are unable to read that precious volume that maketh wise unto salvation, it may be inferred that vast multitudes are unacquainted with the way of salvation, and therefore utterly neglectful of those things that belong to their peace; that tens of thousands of immortal beings are rapidly passing onward to eternity, unprepared to hear that sentence from which there is no appeal, and which will ring for ever in their ears.

That spiritual destitution largely prevails may next be gathered from the deficiency of church accommodation.—The supply of churches has not nearly kept pace with a fast increasing population. Since the commencement of the present century, the half of which has all but elapsed, the population of Great Britain has been doubled. In 1801, its inhabitants amounted to 10,500,000; and at this date they cannot be under 21,000,000. Now, while within the last half century the people have so enormously multiplied, there has been no corresponding multiplication of places of worship. The Disruption greatly augmented the number of our sanctuaries in Scotland; but still even here, in some localities, there is not a sufficiency of church accommodation. In the country districts, with perhaps a few rare exceptions, there is ample pew room for all capable of availing themselves of it; but it is not so in all the cities, particularly Glasgow. That city has a population of 360,000, and would therefore require church sittings for at least 216,000; that is, for 60 out of every 100, who should be church-goers. Yet Glasgow, with its 30 new Free churches, has church accommodation only for about 130,000, a little more

than one-half of those who, if it were a thorough church-going town, would be found, in ordinary circumstances, every successive Sabbath wending their way to the house of prayer. 80 or 100 additional churches are needed, in order to provide ample church room for the whole population of the western commercial capital, that might and ought to be seated, Sabbath after Sabbath, in the sanctuary. Several of the other Scottish towns are also somewhat defective even yet in church accommodation, for 60 out of the 100 of all their denizens.

In the south, there is, for the most part, a greater deficiency of church accommodation. It is calculated, by those who have the best means of being correctly informed, that the great metropolis is not half supplied with ecclesiastical buildings for its swarming and almost countless multitudes. Dr Campbell, who knows London well, is one of those who makes this calculation. He says—"The cities of London and Westminster, and the boroughs of Lambeth, Southwark, the Tower Hamlets, Finsbury, and Marylebone, comprise a population of 1,434,868 persons. In these 7 cities and boroughs, there are 627 places of worship of all denominations, which will accommodate 473,961 sitters—a number less by 5,000 or 6,000 than one-third of the whole population. We therefore require to have our city sittings more than doubled rightly to meet the existing, and to anticipate the hourly-increasing wants of the population."* Many churches have, no doubt, been erected since this statement was penned by its distinguished author; but the population of London, increasing at the rate of 25,000 annually, has more than

* "Jethro," a prize essay, by Dr Campbell, pp. 18, 19.

correspondingly increased; so that, at this date, its church sittings require to be more than doubled to provide church room for all its inhabitants. Not a few of the large towns of England, the emporiums of British trade—such as Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham, Sheffield—are likewise very defective in church accommodation. For example, in the last-mentioned town, containing, with the suburbs, a population of 150,000, there are, in all, only 29 places of worship; 10 Episcopal, 6 Independent, 9 Methodist, 3 Baptist, and 1 belonging to the Society of Friends. It is evident, then, that in Sheffield, so renowned for its cutlery, the churches would need to be more than doubled to contain all who should be in attendance upon them. Leeds, and some particular towns and districts of England, seem to be much better situated with regard to church accommodation. According to returns made to E. Baines, Esq., of the *Leeds Mercury*, in 1843, and published by him, there were then in Leeds 89 places of worship, with 67,236 sittings, for a population of 152,054, so that church room was provided for 45 per cent. of the entire inhabitants. Since these statistics were taken and printed, the population has largely increased; but Mr Baines thinks the additional church accommodation furnished is fully greater than the increase of the population. Granting that such is the case to some extent, yet Leeds cannot be regarded as adequately provided with church room, although, in this respect, considerably ahead of other English towns. The same gentleman, to whom we are indebted for these facts, states that, in some of the manufacturing districts in Yorkshire, Lancashire, and Cheshire, there are church sittings for nearly 50 per cent. of the Protestant popu-

lation. That even is not quite sufficient; and as I am credibly informed, it is certainly not common in the larger towns of England, although common enough in the smaller and country districts. From this sad deficiency of church accommodation in many of our overgrown, but still ever-growing towns, there cannot fail to be a vast breadth of spiritual destitution; there cannot fail to be thousands upon thousands who are as sheep without a shepherd, and who are posting onward, if mercy prevent not, to the regions of undying wo. The want of the means of religious instruction, necessarily implies a want of the instruction itself, and of all its attendant invaluable blessings.

It is quite true, and it pains us to have it to state, that the great majority of our Christian temples are but partially filled, and that not a few of them are all but unoccupied, if not wholly empty. Taken in the aggregate, they could accommodate nearly the double of those who weekly repair to them for engaging in the most profitable and most delightful of all exercises. *But this painful fact serves only to demonstrate that the masses who neglect divine ordinances are more numerous than even the paucity of sacred edifices indicates.* If our church sittings, which cannot nearly accommodate those who ought to constitute the church-going population, be but only half-occupied, the breadth and depth of indifferentism must be far greater than the mere numerical amount of churches would lead us to expect.

The deficiency of education, and of church accommodation, prove *inferentially* that the spiritual destitution of Britain is both wide-spread and deep-seated. What may be thus legitimately inferred, is fully confirmed by *the actual state of church attendance, and other*

indisputable criteria. When the population of London, in 1831, was 1,500,000, a late writer calculated that 800,000, or more than a half, made no public profession of religion. In 1841, when its population was 2,103,279, it was estimated that 1,300,000 of that number never entered the gates of Zion; and now, when its population must be at least 2,300,000, it is commonly said, and commonly believed, that 1,500,000, or about two-thirds of its swarming multitudes, absent themselves from the house of prayer, and live utterly regardless of divine things. Corroborative of this, we call attention to the following quotations:—“The neglect of public worship among the working classes of the metropolis, and especially the men, is almost universal. ‘Of the men (writes one missionary, located on even a suburban district), I only know of 12 who are what may be termed regular attendants at the house of God;’ while another missionary, in a closer part of London, whose district has increased by increase of population to double the ordinary size, writes, that ‘he can reckon up only the same number of women and men out of 1000 families;’ and he adds to this statement, ‘This is, however, only the number who profess to attend the service of the Lord. I have reason to doubt the truth of the profession of some of them.’ After all that is yet done to evangelize London, the number of its population who leave the boundaries of its metropolis any fine Sunday in the summer months by railroad, or steamer, or other public conveyance, for the purpose of Sabbath-breaking, is supposed to exceed the number of those left behind who worship at all our churches and chapels.”* “It is a fact, that on an average, after

* “The Fourteenth Report of the London City Mission,” p. 11.

making allowance for the variation of attendants at different services, not more than 600,000 persons attend public worship; consequently, from various causes, every Lord's day in London, during every service, about *one million four hundred thousand attend neither church nor chapel*. How appalling the consideration, that a population about equal to half the people of Scotland, dwell in London and its suburbs, who attend no ministration of the gospel! After making allowance for infants and the sick, the contrast is most affecting.* In moving the adoption of the "Fifteenth Annual Report of the London City Mission," the Rev. W. W. Champneys thus spoke:—"And first of all, let us look at London as it is. Consider that there are 2,000,000 of human beings, one-eighth of the estimated population of England, condensed in that small space on which our London stands. Now, among these we can scarcely reckon 500,000 regularly and constantly attending a place of worship, and we have then three-fourths of the vast population of London not going to the house of God, and many of them, probably, have never heard of the way of salvation."† The last two quotations speak of the population of London, in round numbers, as being 2,000,000; but its population, I am assured, is now upwards of 2,300,000. While they refer to the population of the metropolis in round numbers, yet they confirm what we have on private authority, that at least two-thirds of those who inhabit the great city are church deserters.

Manchester, including Salford and suburbs, has a population of about 330,000, *the majority* of whom habi-

* "The Christian Spectator," of date July 17, 1850, p. 538.

† "London City Mission Magazine," for June 1850, p. 139.

tually absent themselves from the house of the Lord. A respected minister, who should be acquainted with its moral condition, wrote me, that "he feared *two-thirds of the adult working classes* rarely entered a place of worship." "The town missionaries," he said, "have found many streets containing a crowded population, where not above two or three individuals attended anywhere." Birmingham, with its suburbs, contains a population of 210,000, and of these, as the Rev. J. A. James states, in his "Earnest Church," a work which every one should possess, not more than 40,000 above 12 years of age are ever at any place of worship at the same time.* Now, as 50 per cent. above that age should be church goers, 45 of whom might on an average be every Sabbath-day in the sanctuary, we thereby learn that 90,000 in Birmingham, inclusive of children, may be reckoned professors, and the rest, or fully more than the half, non-professors. The spiritual condition of Sheffield, with a population of 150,000, is equally low. One who cannot fail to be acquainted with its spiritual state lately wrote me that his impression is, "that one-half of the adult population are habitual Sabbath-breakers." The deficiency of its church accommodation, which we have had occasion already to refer to, would indicate that this is an under estimate, especially as I am informed by the same gentleman that "very few of its places of worship are full." Liverpool is not much better than Birmingham and Sheffield. Two years ago, the Sabbath committee of the Evangelical Alliance, after a careful investigation into the state of its church attendance, calculated that there could be no fewer than 100,000 adults who systematically neglected public

* *Vide* p. 93 of the "Church in Earnest," by John Angell James.

worship. And this calculation, I am assured by a member who acted on the committee, is too low. This estimate was exclusive of the great body of Roman Catholics who, to the number of 30,000, were reckoned church frequenters. In Liverpool, the same estimable minister to whom I am indebted for these statistics writes, that it is said there are from 15,000 to 20,000 ragged children. Taking these facts into consideration, and remembering that the Sabbath committee proceeded on the supposition that the population of that commercial seaport was 330,000, we must reckon the half of its inhabitants as habitual church neglecters and Sabbath violators. Bolton has a population of 70,000, and yet the average attendance of young and old, at every place of worship within its precincts, does not exceed 17,000. In Newcastle, with a population of about 50,000, the average Sabbath-day attendance in all the churches and chapels is not much above 12,000. In Longtown, Staffordshire, with a population of 16,000, I have been told that there are never more than 4,000 at all the churches any Lord's day. "It is stated on good authority that of the 5,000 miners in Bilston there are 4,000 who attend no place of worship; and that the whole number of persons arrived at years of discretion, in that place and the district immediately surrounding it, who thus entirely neglect the ordinances of religion, is 11,000 out of a population of 24,000."* In like manner, it is computed that, throughout the great majority of the large English towns and populous villages, from a half to two-thirds of their inhabitants turn their back

* Mr Mosley's Report for 1846, on the Midland District, as contained in the "Minutes of Committee of Council on Education," vol. i., p. 178.

upon the sanctuary, and seek their own pleasure on the sacred day of rest.

Some of the larger towns and villages of Scotland are nearly as low in point of church attendance. The population of Glasgow is at present about 360,000; and according to David Stow, Esq., than whom none is better acquainted with the moral state of that town, there are at least 180,000, or the half of the whole, who neglect divine ordinances, and are totally unconcerned about the best interests of themselves and children.* Dundee has a population of upwards of 70,000; and I have been informed, by an intelligent gentleman who takes a deep interest in the subject treated of in this volume, that the average attendance at all the Protestant churches is only about 15,000, which may represent a population of about 30,000. Now, suppose there are 10,000 Roman Catholics in the town, there will still be left 30,000, or exactly the half, who are living in a state of practical heathenism. In confirmation of this calculation, one of the local papers, in giving an account of the second quarterly meeting of the "Christian Evangelical Instruction Society," thus speaks: "Several of the agents present at the meeting gave very interesting accounts of the progress of their operations, and of the condition of the out-field population. From these it would seem that the number of families in Dundee not connected with any religious body *is almost incredible*. In one close or land, it was stated there were upwards of 500 individuals belonging to this class, in another 150, and so on."† It was shown by the "Christian Instruction Committee," in 1836, that in Paisley there

* "Stow's Training System," Eighth Edition, pp. 48, 49.

† *Northern Warden*, August 8, 1850.

were not fewer than 28,000 out of a population of 50,000 unconnected with any religious denomination. And Paisley as yet has undergone no improvement in this respect. The writer was lately informed, by an esteemed minister of that town, that at a meeting of clerical brethren recently held, and at which all the denominations were represented, it was calculated that not more than 12,000 were ever present at the same time in the house of God; which shows that at least the half of its inhabitants desecrate the Sabbath, and neglect the momentous concerns of eternity. In Dumfries, including Maxwelltown, with a population of 16,000, it was lately ascertained that the average attendance at all the churches was about 4,000. In Montrose, with a population of 14,000, and in Arbroath, with a population of 18,000, it was recently found that the average attendance at all the churches was, in the former 4,800, and in the latter 6,700. In a paper printed by the City Mission of Edinburgh, at the beginning of this year, we find the following statement, which gives us some notion of the spiritually destitute state of our Scottish metropolis: “It is a distressing thought, that two-thirds of the people in several of our missionary districts are living in total disregard of religious worship, and in some localities even a greater proportion. Not fewer, perhaps, than 60,000 in the city are thus living.” The population of Edinburgh being about 140,000, it thus appears that above a third of its inhabitants pay no attention to the call, “Go ye up to the house of the Lord.” The population of Kilmarnock is estimated at present at 23,000; and yet, inclusive of Romanists, the attendance at all the churches is not more than 8,000; so that 7,000 of its inhabitants,

or nearly a third, make no public profession of religion. In Greenock, with a population of 38,000, it is supposed that about a third neglect public worship, and live without God and without hope in the world. Several of the smaller Scottish burghs make a more favourable exhibition in regard to the matter under consideration; but still, with one or two exceptions, they are far from being what they ought to be. About five-twelfths of the whole inhabitants of Campbeltown, and about a half of the population of Brechin, regularly frequent the sanctuary; so that nearly all the inhabitants in these places may be regarded as professors.

Our mining and manufacturing villages, with some exceptional cases, are as bad as the generality of the towns in regard to church attendance. The population of Johnstone, and its immediate neighbourhood, dependant on it for religious ordinances, cannot be under 7,000. Allowing 1,400 of these to belong to the Popish church, and 100 to a few evangelical denominations who have no church in the place, and who commonly worship elsewhere, there are at least 5,600 who should be connected with one or other of the churches; so that, were Johnstone thoroughly evangelized, nearly 3,000 would be found seated in the house of God every Sabbath. But the author can confidently affirm, that the average attendance at all the churches is not above 1,700, or little more than a half of those who should regularly wait upon the public means of grace. The population of the town and parish of Girvan amounts at present to 8,000 souls. And yet, from an excellent little pamphlet published last year by the Rev. Adam Blyth, we learn, "that on any ordinary Sabbath throughout the year, there are not more than 1,500 persons to

be found within the walls of all the eight churches in Girvan added together. Instead, therefore, of *one-half*, there is considerably less than *one-fifth* of the population on any one Sabbath under the hearing of the preached gospel. In other words, there are within the parish of Girvan 2,500 persons *who ought to be at church every Sabbath*, but who never cross the threshold of a place of worship—who are living in the habitual neglect of divine ordinances—who are, in short, living in a state of practical heathenism.”

Thus it appears that, in the generality of the more populous English towns and villages, from a half to two-thirds, and in the generality of the more populous Scottish towns and villages, nearly one-half systematically neglect public worship, and contemn the divine authority. To prevent any thing like exaggeration, we shall fix upon a half for all our larger towns and villages, as the proportion of their inhabitants who habitually neglect religious ordinances. The country districts are not in general so low in point of church attendance as the towns. Some of them in the south, as appears from the Reports of the Home Missionary Society, and other sources of intelligence, are not much ahead; but yet, as far as we have any means of knowing, they ought not to be put into the same category as the cities. We would say, that not more than one-fourth of those who reside in the country are habitual church neglecters. Throughout Scotland the proportion is even much smaller, but in many parts of England I am afraid it is much larger. Fixing, then, upon *one-fourth* as the proportion of the rural population, and upon *one-half* as the proportion of the urban population who make no visible profession of religion, and supposing the town

and country residents to be equally numerous, there will be in the 21,000,000 of living beings in Great Britain 7,875,000, or in round numbers 8,000,000—more than a third of the whole—who turn their back on the public ordinances of God's house, and give no sign whatever of spiritual life. This may seem a large estimate, but it is corroborated by the statistical inquiries which have been prosecuted under the auspices of the Home Missionary Society. In the Annual Report of that Society for 1834 it is stated, that "nearly 5,000,000 either do not attend the means of grace, or are unsupplied with them." Now when it is borne in mind that that calculation referred solely to England, and that the work of demoralization has been going on apace since it was made, there cannot be a doubt *eight millions* is not an over-estimate of the vast masses of our countrymen, who have forsaken the sanctuary and forgotten their God. Several individuals with whom the writer has conversed, and who are well acquainted with the moral and spiritual state of the nation, regard this as an under-estimate, maintaining that undoubtedly *one-half of the entire population* habitually absent themselves from the public ordinances of our holy religion. Such may be the case, but any statistics with which I have been furnished lead me to fix upon 8,000,000 as *at least an approximation to truth on this painful subject.*

What an appalling amount of spiritual destitution does this disclose! Only think, that in this land of Bibles and churches there are doubtless considerably above a third who have no connection with any particular denomination, who lend a deaf ear to the call of the Sabbath bell that summonses professing Christians to the house of prayer! We wish to fix attention on this

aggregate mass of non-professors, as many, it may be supposed, are not fully aware of it. Perhaps they are startled on hearing, now and again, of thousands in this city, and tens of thousands in that other city, who are passing onward to eternity totally unprepared for standing before the judgment-seat of Christ; but it may be they have never dreamt that the out-field population is not far short of 8,000,000 of souls. To imprint this astounding fact on all our memories, and at the same time in a form that may help to awaken our sympathies, let us recollect that our fellow-countrymen who make no open profession of religion, are equal to the population of Scotland, Wales, and the six north-western counties of England—Northumberland, Durham, Cumberland, Westmoreland, Lancashire, and Cheshire. Suppose, then, that the church frequenters and the church deserters were separated and located apart, the latter would people North Britain, the Welsh Principality, and the six English Provinces just mentioned, fully more numerously than they are at present peopled. Now, if these regions were solely inhabited by men, women, and children utterly destitute of the means of grace, and utterly regardless of divine things, would not their southern neighbours, who as a body enjoyed religious ordinances, and professed to value them, commiserate their pitiable condition, and pour in among them qualified agents to convince them of their sinful state, and to point them to the Saviour, that they might be delivered from condemnation, and prepared for the kingdom of glory? In the circumstances supposed, a movement of this kind might be anticipated. And should the fact of our admixture with gospel despisers make us less zealous in seeking their conversion?

On the contrary, it should rather stimulate our zeal, it should rather constrain us to labour more assiduously and more energetically in endeavouring to win them back to God, and to save them from that fearful doom which awaits all the unbelieving and impenitent.

In regard to this immense multitude who make no profession, we must look upon them in the aggregate as irreligious. Far be it from us to affirm there are no true Christians among them; but we cannot suppose such characters to be numerous. Men may have, and alas! too often have, the form of godliness without the power, but it is rare indeed for any to have the power without the form. We make this statement with a perfect knowledge of the common plea—want of suitable apparel—urged by so many for their neglect of religious ordinances. This excuse is more specious than solid. The lack of holiday raiment, we believe, deters vast numbers from the sanctuary; but why should it do so? The labourer plies his avocation in the coarsest attire, and the mendicant besieges our doors clothed in tattered habiliments; and why should they be ashamed, if need be, to worship God in the same dress? To any such interrogation they commonly reply, It is not customary for people to appear in the house of the Lord meanly attired. It is not, we readily admit; but then we ask again, Is custom to nullify and supersede the divine authority, and to force men to starve their souls? Besides, if all who urge this plea were regularly to frequent the sanctuary in their everyday clothing, they would alter this prejudicial custom, and render an essential service to the cause of Christ throughout the realm. The excuse, then, we are combating is baseless and untenable, and will not be pled by those who are strong in the faith and who

pant after righteousness as the hart panteth after the water brooks. In saying this, we do not deny but what some weak Christians may be so blinded by it as to withdraw themselves from the courts of the Lord, although we are strongly convinced they will be few in number. Allowing, however, that there may be a sprinkling of godly people among the mass of non-professors, yet, speaking generally, we are constrained to conclude that, as a whole, they are dead in trespasses and sins, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God.

Not only are they in the aggregate ungodly and immoral, but most of them are grossly ignorant, highly sceptical, and deeply depraved. Their sottish ignorance may be inferred from the statistics of education, church accommodation, and church attendance, which have been previously enumerated. Many of them, besides being unable to read, are totally unacquainted with the simplest Bible truths, and have no knowledge whatever of moral obligation. In an examination of 698 work people, between the ages of 13 and 21 years, employed in four factories in Glasgow, and drawn from all parts of the city and suburbs, it was found that "211 of them knew a few of the names and leading characters and events mentioned in Scripture; that 361 knew who Jesus was, but were totally ignorant of the events and characters mentioned in either the Old or New Testaments; and that 126 could not tell who Jesus was, and nearly all of them never heard of his name, except from profane swearers. Of these last, many were found entirely ignorant of his dignity, or character, or work. We are not to suppose that these young persons are Roman Catholics; for every person knows that whatever this class may be ignorant of, the name of Jesus is well

remembered and often repeated. The Roman Catholic children which were examined very readily answered that *Jesus is the second person of the blessed Trinity*; but when questioned as to their knowledge of some of the patriarchs, or prophets, or apostles, answers were given such as the following:—*Sir, we don't know any thing about these gentlemen.** If such ignorance prevails amongst our youthful operatives, is it to be expected that advancing years will bring wisdom? Assuredly not. A respected minister informed the writer, that, when recently in Manchester, he preached in a hall to 50 individuals who had never even heard of Christ, and who, as he went on explaining the scheme of redemption, appeared greatly surprised and astonished. Though it may be the fewest number of our outcasts, who are as ignorant as Hottentots, yet most of them have very indistinct and confused ideas of the simplest truths of revelation. They may be able to tell you there is a Bible, and a God, and a Saviour; but if you ask them any thing more, if you ask them about the atonement, or justification, or regeneration, they are completely nonplussed. Many of them, no doubt, are desirous to have baptism administered to their children; but this arises either from their regarding it as a decent way of *naming* an infant, or from superstitious notions of its saving efficacy, however dispensed.

The amazing ignorance of the vast majority of the neglected masses, is only equalled by their infidelity and ungodliness. Besides being utterly devoid both of the knowledge and power of religion, the great bulk of them are leavened with infidel principles, and corrupted

* “*The Training System*,” by David Stow, Esq., Eighth Edition, pp. 97, 98.

to the core by vicious indulgences. Reading, or hearing read, those vile publications now so abundant, and wanting in that wisdom and those habits which can alone resist the poisonous influences of infidelity, the church-deserting multitudes as a body are decidedly sceptical in their notions, and thus prepared for pursuing unchecked the downward career of vice. And having no fear of God before their eyes, and surrounded on every hand by temptation, they are awfully vicious and depraved. “Of this I am convinced more fully every time that I walk in any of the back streets in the larger towns, or visit any of the way villages, and listen to the conversation of their inhabitants, and observe something of their conduct, that there is an amount of ignorance, and vice, and degradation amongst them, which it is difficult to imagine, and hardly possible to describe in plain language.”* Indeed, the sad description Paul, under the guidance of inspiration, gave of the ancient heathen world, is truly applicable to our home heathen:—“And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful.”† Dark and dismal as

* Mr Watkins’ Report on the Northern District for 1846, as contained in the “Minutes of Committee of Council on Education,” vol. i. p. 442.

† Rom. i. 28-31.

this picture of ancient heathenism is, it is an accurate representation of the deep depravity that characterises the great body of the outfield masses of this country. They are forgetful of their Maker, wedded to their lusts, and to every good work reprobate. Fraud, theft, concubinage, incest, beastliness, and practices which humanity shudders to contemplate, are quite customary among a large proportion of our Sabbath-day profaners. Among them vice is enthroned and worshipped, depraved passions reign uncontrolled, revolting immoralities are committed, and unnatural cruelties perpetrated. All laws, human and divine, they trample under foot, and seem as if striving who shall reach the lowest point of moral degradation. Some parents corrupt their children, that they may live upon the wages of their iniquity; and others poison and destroy their offspring, for the sake of securing a paltry sum of burial money. Many sins equally monstrous and horrific are secretly committed, whose very names would be polluting, and which, therefore, we cannot venture to mention. It is a shame even to speak of the things which are done of them in secret, and yet these are done, not in the centre of heathenism, but in the centre of Christendom. Oh! how humiliating to think, that millions in Protestant Britain, with its enviable privileges, are as thoroughly brutified and hardened as the rudest savages of the darkest land of Paganism. Nay, I would venture to affirm, that some of our home heathen surpass in wickedness the most debased barbarians on the face of the earth; so that were a search made for the lowest specimen of humanity, it would require to be prosecuted, not on the sunny plains of Asia, or amidst the barren wilds of Africa, but in the crowded cities of our fa-

ther-land, where socialism and infidelity nestle, and where vice unblushingly lifts up its hydra-head, diffusing all around a moral miasma, and threatening to drive religion from our borders.

Bad in the main as the home heathen are, they are nevertheless very dissimilar, and may be divided into four great classes. 1 The first and best, although by far the smallest class, consists of those who, by the pressure of outward circumstances, and the turmoil of incessant removals in quest of employment, have for a season forsaken the sanctuary, without having altogether forgotten its lessons. These are the most hopeful of the outfield population, and should be sought out and awakened from their incipient deadness and drowsiness. 2 The second class embraces all those who either from the total want of early religious instruction, or from the long neglect of religious observances, have lapsed into a state of normal indifference, but labouring all the while to maintain a decent independence, and paying some little respect to the moral proprieties of life. Though not so hopeful as those previously mentioned, they rank next to them. 3 The third class comprehends all those who, more or less imbued with scepticism, regard pleasure as the supreme object of existence, and who trample, without remorse, on all the fences of virtue. To this class belong not a few of the high-born, the wealthy, and the educated—spoiled children of rank, riches, and learning—whom aristocratic hauteur, worldly success, or intellectual pride, has blinded, perverted, and debased. 4 The fourth and last class, includes all those who have reached a lower depth still, who outrage all common decency, at once adepts in crime and brutes in vice, being clothed with iniquity as with a garment, and “sinning as with

a cart rope." The classification now made serves to show, that while sottish ignorance and great ungodliness characterise the outfield population, they are, nevertheless, as a body, pervaded by great moral diversity. This deserves to be noticed, both as an act of justice to many who have withdrawn from the courts of the Lord, and also as a guide to the home missionary, who is often required to make a selection of cases, and always bound to use a remedy adapted to the peculiar form and in-veteracy of the moral malady with which he has to deal.

And it ought not to be forgotten, that the aggregate of our careless countrymen who may be thus classified, are always increasing in numbers and in depravity. With such rapidity are they multiplying, that if something be not effectively done, and that speedily, to check their multiplication, they will, in the course of a few short years, out-number those who professedly belong to the Church of Christ. And what is no less alarming, they are gradually becoming more sceptical, more reckless, and more brutish; they are gradually growing more hardened and more hopeless. The fiery, inflammable mass, is daily gathering heat and strength, and thus daily assuming a more threatening and explosive appearance; and hence, if allowed to thicken and boil unchecked, it may, like the volcanic cone, unexpectedly burst into a flame, and bury all our social verdure beneath the resistless torrent of its scorching lava.

Our remarks have hitherto been restricted to those who make no visible profession of religion. Along with these, as standing equally in need of evangelization, should be ranked Jews, Socinians, and Romanists,

and all others whose creed is confessedly unsound. How many such reside in the kingdom, we have not been able correctly to ascertain. In the metropolis, there are a few thousand Jews; but that class of people are thinly scattered throughout the provinces. Then, with regard to the Socinians—commonly, but improperly, called Unitarians—they are by no means a numerous body, although they have of late considerably increased in the south. The same, however, we regret to say, cannot be affirmed of the Roman Catholics, who have established themselves in all parts of the land, especially in our larger towns and manufacturing localities, and who are multiplying with astonishing rapidity. More than a million of these are to be found within the realm. As, however, many of them have ceased to make any profession, and thus help to swell the great number of outcasts which exist among us, we shall reckon them only at half a million. Others, who adhere to corrupt systems of religion, may be equally numerous; so that, in all, there may be one million who, though professors, are, as a body, far from the kingdom of God, and who should, strictly speaking, be added to the 8,000,000 who make no profession—which gives *nine millions* as the frightful total of our countrymen whose spiritual condition is truly deplorable, and whose reclamation all who know the truth are bound to seek with unremitting assiduity.

And how stands it with the remaining 12,000,000 who professedly belong to one or other of the numerous denominations into which the Protestant Church is divided? Alas! alas! a large proportion of these are scarcely distinguishable from those on whom we have been animadverting. They belong by profession

to the Church of Christ, but they give no satisfactory sign of living under the power of the truth. Many of these are mere occasional hearers, who go to the church as they go to the market, just when it suits their inclination or convenience. What hope can be entertained of such professors? Multitudes, again, who attend the house of prayer with more or less regularity, pay no attention to our Lord's dying command, "This do in remembrance of me." Out of the 600,000 or 700,000 of professing Christians in London, it has lately been ascertained there are only 60,000 communicants, or 1 for every 10 who frequent the sanctuary. In some of the English counties, the number of joined members is proportionably few. At his primary visitation, the Bishop of Winchester thus addressed his assembled clergy:—"I observe, by the returns, that the communicants in this diocese very rarely exceed one-tenth part of the congregation, and, in the *great majority of instances, the proportion is still smaller.* This suggests a fearful consideration. Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine? What judgment is the minister to form of that part of his charge who live in the habitual neglect of this ordinance? What hope can he entertain of being able to render up his account of them with joy?" In Scotland, the members bear a far greater proportion to the adherents than in England; yet, even in Presbyterian Scotland, there are not a few who go up to the house of the Lord, who never partake of the gospel passover. And we ask, in the language of the excellent prelate just quoted, "What judgment is the minister to form of that part of his charge who live in the habitual neglect of this ordinance?" Farther, many who pretty

regularly occupy their accustomed pew, some of whom, as often as opportunities occur and circumstances permit, take their seats at the communion table, are grossly immoral, the slaves of licentiousness, intemperance, and covetousness, men who are utter strangers to self-denial and devotedness. To these, God himself says, "Who hath required this at your hands, that ye should tread my courts?" And finally, is not their name legion who present themselves before God on the Sabbath, and who maintain a fair exterior, but who neglect to erect the family altar, and to call on the name of the Lord? What shall be said of these? Can religion be put off and on, like the Sabbath suit? Can a man really worship God aright in public, and forget to worship him in the family and in the closet? Is there any converted soul who is not eminently a praying soul? The child who has been a single year at a well-conducted Sabbath school, will be able to answer these questions correctly.

Such and similar considerations lead us to conclude that a vast proportion of professing Christians are mere nominalists, as lifeless and worthless as many who never darken a church door. And it is this painful but stubborn fact that makes the prevailing spiritual destitution all the more appalling, that surrounds it with a darker and more dismal hue. It shows that many belonging to the various churches have a tendency to break loose from them, and to augment the almost incredible number of the openly careless, and that the churches themselves, on this very account, do not occupy a proper vantage-ground for invading the enemy's territory, and turning the tide of conquest in their own favour. Paralysed and emasculated by chronic dis-

tempers, they are far from being in the best condition for fighting manfully and successfully the battles of the Lord, and for planting the standard of the cross in all the moral wildernesses of the land. As the gathering clouds cover the face of nature with darkness and gloominess, so this darkens and deepens the spiritual wastes by which we are on every side surrounded, and gives us no small anxiety for the future. If all the churches were composed of true Christians, if the entire body of the 12,000,000 of professors, or even a large proportion of them, were thoroughly imbued with the spirit of Christianity, and bent on enlarging Messiah's kingdom, efforts could easily be brought to bear on the extensive barren tracks, that would speedily turn them into fruitful fields of righteousness and peace. May all nominalists be created anew, and adopted into the divine family; and may these, along with those already regenerated, be filled with the Spirit, and thoroughly furnished unto every good work, that they may break up the fallow ground of home-heathenism, and turn every British hearth into a garden of the Lord!

CHAPTER II.

THE CAUSES OF THE PREVAILING SPIRITUAL DESTITUTION.

“ O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself.”—Hos. xiii. 9.

THAT nothing exists uncaused is self-evident. All whose minds are rightly constituted readily admit that every effect is traceable to some cause or causes adequate to its production. This being admitted, it is clear that the prevailing spiritual destitution to which attention has been directed, must spring from sources sufficient to account for its existence. These a prying curiosity might prompt us to investigate and unfold. It is scarcely possible for any of us to look abroad on the face of society, and to think of millions sunk in the depths of irreligion and profligacy, without inquiring what has produced this fearful state of demoralization. While mere inquisitiveness may impel to the prosecution of this inquiry, yet it is a motive of high philanthropy which should stimulate us to make it. We should search into the causes with the noble design of assisting to devise a proper remedy, since, according to the proverb, “ to know the cause is half the cure.” And this is our design in this chapter. Convinced that a minute acquaintance with the springs of the evil is necessary to their stoppage, and therefore to the arrestment of that tide of heathenism which is now overflowing

the land, we must give these a searching investigation. The more we know of them, the better able shall we be to pronounce on the remedial measures which should be adopted for the evangelization of the degraded multitudes by whom on all hands we are surrounded. Let us then proceed to lay open the springs of our abounding depravity.

The great cause is man's inherent corruption, and consequently his aversion to spiritual things. Wholly corrupted, he dislikes and disrelishes all that would assimilate him to God, and lead his thoughts to holy and heavenly contemplations. As a natural consequence, he cannot be expected to make any spontaneous search after the truth. When, therefore, any one is left to grow up unheeded, like a tree in the desert, it may be supposed that he will remain lifeless and indifferent. Instead of getting more concerned about his soul as he advances in years, he will get more callous and more apathetic. Time, as it rolls onward, will always find him farther from God and more indisposed to spiritual and eternal verities.

Passing, with these few remarks, from this general cause, let us enumerate a few of those numerous causes which are more specific and more palpable.

The first we shall mention is, the great deficiency of the means of moral and religious instruction.—The population has nearly doubled itself since the commencement of the present century, but there has been no corresponding increase of gospel machinery, no corresponding increase of churches and schools, with their necessary complement of ministers and teachers. As a natural consequence, the population has vastly outgrown the means of its moral and spiritual elevation. In Glasgow,

for example, nearly 100 additional churches, with 1000 sittings each, are required to accommodate all who should be in attendance on religious ordinances. This is but a specimen of the spiritual wants of other populous places. Again, in Scotland, there are at least 100,000 children for whom no school accommodation is provided, and for whose mental and moral training no man seems to care. And if this is the state of matters in Scotland, it must be much worse in England, as the north in its educational state is considerably ahead of the south. In short, all admit there is a great lack of churches and schools, ministers and schoolmasters, in the large towns and populous districts of this highly favoured land. If so, what else could be expected but that dense masses of our countrymen would fall into the ranks of paganism, and follow the devices of their own imaginations. As previously noticed, all by nature dislike the truth; and, therefore, if let alone, if allowed to proceed in the devious paths of vice unwarned, unheeded, men will never search out for a sanctuary, nor make any effort to save themselves. Hence, it is plain, that with a great deficiency of ecclesiastical apparatus and pastoral superintendence, there must be a great and growing outfield population ignorant of God, and of all that is intimately connected with their spiritual and eternal wellbeing. If men naturally cleave to their idols, and require to be instructed, warned, entreated, before any hope of their conversion can be entertained, is any thing plainer than that they should hold fast their iniquity, when the very means of intellectual culture and moral suasion are awanting? Assuredly not. This consideration partly accounts for the vast moral wastes of our beloved land,

for the countless thousands who are posting on to eternity, not more thoroughly depraved than utterly reckless. When there are vast multitudes for whom no means of mental and moral instruction are provided, and in whose eternal welfare few seem interested, their spiritual degradation is simply the effect of their circumstances—it is no more unaccountable than the rich crop of noxious weeds in the field of the slattern. Oh! it is sad to think that in a Protestant country such criminal neglect should exist—it is sad to think that in a land where so many know the joyful sound, and where there is so much wealth expended on private dwellings and public edifices, there should be a grievous deficiency of sanctuaries and seminaries for an ever-increasing population. Were a prophet to appear among us, would he not—looking on the one hand at our finely decorated halls, and our sumptuous mansions, and on the other at our miserable supply of Christian temples—would he not, we say, on taking this glance, expostulate with us as Haggai, by divine command, did with the Jews of old, when their temple was in ruins, saying, “Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your ceiled houses, and this house lie waste?”

A second cause is, the heterodoxy, unfaithfulness, inactivity, and inconsistency of many who have held, as well as of many who now hold the pastoral office.—It was not without reason that the apostles enjoined the church to “try the spirits, whether they be of God,” as many unprofitable teachers have found their way into it in every age. Numbers utterly destitute of all those qualifications which are absolutely essential to the faithful and successful discharge of spiritual duties, have intruded themselves into the ministry, and have hin-

dered the work they were solemnly bound to forward. Some of these have been wofully heterodox, while others have been immoral and indifferent, living idly and luxuriously, and allowing their flocks either to starve, or to be devoured by prowling wolves. This is corroborated by the history of the British churches.

About the end of the 17th and the beginning of the 18th century, not a few clergymen of the English Establishment secretly embraced Arianism, while the great body of them were cold, careless, and utterly useless. Their pulpit ministrations lacked solidity, fidelity, and animation, so that they were instrumental in deadening and destroying the precious souls committed to their charge. The English Presbyterian ministers of that period shared in the doctrinal unsoundness, unfaithfulness, and drowsiness of their established brethren. They differed from them chiefly in their unconsecrated chaples, and their Dissenterism; and thus helped to bring on almost total darkness over the southern part of the island.

The appearance of Whitefield and Wesley, the second Reformers of England, and the progress of Methodism under their leadership and auspices, served in some measure to call the attention of the Prelatical Church to the value of orthodox doctrine, and also to awaken not a few of its sleeping clergymen from their luxurious repose. But, alas! the Episcopal Church, up to this hour, remains in a very unsatisfactory state. There are doubtless a few learned, evangelical, laborious pastors within its pale, who are worthy of the highest admiration, and for whom we should give thanks to our great Head, by whom they were sent; but still, a large number are thoroughly secular and shamefully slothful,

while not a few—2000 it is reported—are so deeply tainted with Puseyism, which is nothing else than thinly disguised Romanism, that they attach greater value to exploded dogmas and rubrical observances, than to orthodoxy and holiness. What benefit can be expected from the ministrations of men like these? Does not this in a great measure account for the wide-spread accumulating heathenism of the south? It is true, that besides the evangelical working clergymen within the pale of the Establishment, there is without it a goodly number of able, faithful, and zealous Dissenting ministers, who are holding up the lamp of truth, and labouring, in season and out of season, to dispel the moral darkness by which they are surrounded. But, alas! what are these among so many? What are these things among the vast multitudes on their right hand and on their left?

Scotland also, on whom the light of the Reformation shone so brightly, has been greatly injured by her spiritual overseers. During the last century, and the beginning of the present, predominant Moderatism rested as an incubus on the Scottish Establishment, weakening its strength, crippling its energies, and destroying its usefulness. Through the prevalence of Moderate principles, the pulpit was too often filled with men, some of whom were tinged with Socianism, and most of whom sadly lacked the spirit of their office. Instead of impregnating their discourses with gospel truth, and delivering them like those who felt in earnest, they treated their audiences to elaborate moral essays, which were totally unfitted, both as regards matter and manner, to interest, instruct, and edify; and the sad consequences of this state of matters are but too well known. Dark-

ness and deadness overspread a large proportion of those who adhered to the church as by law established, while many who were evangelical in their sentiments, and who walked consistently, received no small moral injury. Up to this hour, Scotland has not recovered the withering blight of Moderatism.

And, in addition to all this pastoral unfitness and unfaithfulness, which has largely contributed to the prevailing irreligion and immorality, it is necessary to observe that there are few placed on the watch-towers of Zion belonging to any sect, who can wash their hands and say, "We are clean in regard to this grave matter." All who stand between the living and the dead are more or less chargeable with failings or deficiencies, which help to swell the aggregate amount of abounding ungodliness and licentiousness. Some want those gifts and graces which are fitted to make them attractive and successful preachers, and thus their corner of the vineyard becomes fallow ground; others confine their labours solely to their own flocks, without, as opportunities occur, going out into the highways and hedges, and compelling the wanderer and wayfarer to come in; and others are not sufficiently faithful in reproving prevailing evils, and in urging their hearers to devote themselves to evangelistic work. Oh! it becomes all of us, whom God has honoured with the ministry of reconciliation, to be deeply humbled for the share we may have in our national heathenism, and to labour diligently in arresting its progress, that we may discharge an incumbent duty, and help to elevate our fellow-subjects, and to save them from a destruction more terrible than that which overwhelmed the Jews when they crucified the Messiah, and became answerable for his blood.

A third cause is the abounding infidelity of the age.—Infidelity is both a cause and a consequence of our country's ungodliness. It springs from heterodoxy and nominalism, and it gives rise to every abomination. It is not of ancient date in this land. Lord Herbert in 1624 was the first of its avowed champions. He was shortly followed by Hobbes and Spinoza, who far surpassed their predecessor in their sceptical sentiments. To these succeeded Blount, and Toland, and Collins, and Shaftesbury, and Tindal, and Hume, and others of lesser note. For a considerable time—we may say till about the close of the last century—infidelity was chiefly confined to the learned; and infidels wrote chiefly, if not entirely, for the more intelligent. But at that period infidels changed their tactics, and gave a new direction to their fearful doctrines. Then they began to popularize their pernicious tenets, and to disseminate them among the populace. Thomas Paine, of infamous memory, was a noted labourer in this destructive work; he and his co-adjutors succeeded in perverting many of all ranks, who, by various concurrent circumstances, were previously prepared for imbibing infidel notions. Ever since his advocacy of infidelity, it has taken deep root in the British soil, and has infected vast multitudes, both among the higher and lower orders of society. Adapted by its advocates to the labouring classes, whose moral and mental culture the church and state have fearfully neglected, it has won their assent and approval, prejudicing them against the truth, and hardening them in sin. Influenced by its shallow but corrupting sophisms, many have not only repudiated Christianity and forsaken the sanctuary, but have lapsed into a fearful state of immorality and wretchedness. Among the great body of its

adherents, domestic strife, social unhappiness, and moral degradation, reign triumphant. And at this advanced period, infidelity is putting forth its whole strength, and adding to its converts in every corner of the land. Our towns literally swarm with sceptics, who have their reading rooms, their debating clubs, and their propagandas; and there are not a few of our larger villages where a considerable proportion of the inhabitants are professed infidels, while there is scarcely a workshop or a manufactory within the limits of the kingdom, in which infidelity has not found a footing, and in which it has not its little band of propagators.

Numberless instances might be given of the truth of this statement. We shall condescend on two, which are sufficient to produce a thrill of horror. A man of the name of M'Wheelan was lately executed at Ayr for murder. After his conviction, he stated, that "if he could be said to be any thing, he was a Protestant by birth." We are told, however, that "his opinions were a mass of the most pernicious of the infidel and social class, which he had imbibed, for the most part, at a smithy in the north of Ayrshire, at which he had wrought for a considerable time as a hammerman, and where these destructive tenets were industriously disseminated among the workmen. These maintained a strong hold on his mind till the last."

In an able lecture on "Prevailing Evils," the Rev. Dr Henderson of Glasgow says:—"I may mention a case of which I have been informed, by one who for a short season was the inmate of the family of a manufacturer, and his establishment consisted of 18 men, who were all banded together by the common bond of infidelity. The circumstances of this case possess an

awful interest, and deserve to be recorded. I know not whether the individual at the head of the concern chose his men for their infidel principles, or whether he found those he took into his employment easy converts to his. But they were all of one mind, and were invited to his table time after time as his chosen companions. His wife, whose principles he had perverted, became reckless in her habits, and died of a broken heart, crying for mercy in tones of thrilling agony, and promising, if spared, to weep tears of blood for her sins. Their only child was utterly neglected and ill-treated by him, and was in mercy soon taken away, but not before she had learned to say, ' My papa does not love me, but my God does.' And last of all, the head of the unhappy home and of this infidel establishment, after publicly proclaiming himself an atheist, was carried, where he continues to this hour, to an asylum for the deranged."

These two examples indicate no less the perniciousness of infidel sentiments, than the proselyting spirit of those who have imbibed them. Oh! that Christians were as busy in propagating Bible truth as infidels are in propagating their demoralizing tenets! When did we ever hear of a convert to Christianity being made in a smithy, or of a Christian master with 18 men, all true believers, whose piety he nourished by the endearments of social intercourse? These infidels put us to the blush.

A fourth cause is the licentiousness of the press.—Almost every thing which is an engine for good, may be perverted and turned into an engine for evil. This receives an awful illustration in the perversion of a large portion of the public press. While our obligations to printing are beyond all computation, it is painful to be obliged

to add, that at present it is one of the most demoralizing agents in the land. It is the great abettor and propagator of infidelity, immorality, and social disorder. A pains-taking writer, who deserves our gratitude, has compiled a work, called "The Power of the Press," which discloses a laboratory for evil almost beyond conception. After stating that 11,702,000 copies of vicious and Sabbath-breaking newspapers are circulated in the kingdom, he passes to a more fearful subject, the cheap unstamped literature provided for the masses, regarding which he thus speaks:—

"There are about 70 cheap periodicals (varying in price from three half-pence to one half-penny) issued weekly; and supposing an extensively circulated series of very popular works issued from Edinburgh (the tendency of which is believed by many to be injurious) are omitted, there remain at least 60 of a positively pernicious tendency. Of these, the most innocent is one which has, perhaps, the largest circulation. It is said to issue 100,000 weekly. But though vicious principles are avowedly repudiated, yet a depraved and disordered imagination is fostered in this journal, by the introduction into its pages of French novels, and similar trash, as a principal feature. Then comes a less scrupulous paper, with a weekly issue of 80,000, followed by 6 papers, variously entitled "Journals," "Weekly Volumes," "Miscellanies," &c., all a degree lower in the scale of corruption, with an average weekly circulation of 20,000 each, or yearly sale for the 6 of 6,240,000. And, lastly, comes a catalogue of intolerably polluting trash, which, closely examined, will make the Christian shudder at its contemplation—wondering where readers can be found, and amazed at the neglect

and idleness of the Church of Christ:—*1st*, in not pre-occupying the ground; and, *2dly*, in not flooding the land with pure and cheap literature. The titles of some of the works alluded to, will sufficiently indicate their character, and render explanation unnecessary. They may be classified thus:—*1st*, infidel; *2dly*, corrupting. Of these two classes there are circulated a total weekly average of 200,000, or an yearly average of 20,400,000.

“But, even beyond this dreadful limit, there is a very large annual circulation into which the writer dared not enter, so awfully polluting is its character. In those previously mentioned, the art of the engraver is brought into constant requisition, in order to depict the most marvellous and horrible circumstances imaginable; and the picture of a murder or an execution is a type of the illustrations used; but, in the last named class, engravings and colourings are employed to excite the lowest passions. It is true, these works are supposed to be sold by stealth, the venders realizing an immense profit; but they are easily procurable from the same sources as the papers and periodicals before mentioned—the venders of the one generally procure the other. Moreover, the unstamped journals previously alluded to usually contain advertisements of these works; and as the sale of these journals is large, they obtain a wide circulation for the filth which, bad as they are themselves, they would profess to abominate. The circulation may, however, be safely set down at 5 per cent. on the 200,000 per week, or 520,000 per year.

“Now, if we sum up the entire yearly circulation of the different kinds of popular, but manifestly pernicious literature, which has been passed in review before the reader, it will stand thus:—

“ 10 stamped papers,	11,702,000
6 unstamped papers,	6,240,000
About 60 miscellaneous papers,	10,400,000
Worst class,	520,000
Being a total of	28,862,000 ” *

What an immense annual issue of pernicious literature is here exhibited! As we learn from the same source, it is greater than the annual issue of religious publications of every description by 4,443,380. Including Bibles, Testaments, religious tracts, newspapers, and periodicals of every kind, we have a total of 24,418,620, leaving a balance, as has just been stated, of 4,443,380 in favour of pernicious and corrupting literature.

These facts disclose one fertile source of the fearfully depraved state of the nation. Such a host of infidel and polluting publications cannot but exert an extensive demoralizing influence. The smallest of them is charged with moral poison, which, if imbibed, will produce detrimental effects. Moreover, they are all perused with avidity, and very often passed from hand to hand with great celerity. Many even read them to their illiterate companions, either in the low drinking saloons, or in clubs formed for the purpose. In many a house the Bible may remain unopened for weeks and months together, but not the folios and periodicals of an infidel press. And, as might be expected, most of their readers are those whose religious education has either been entirely or partially neglected, and whose leanings consequently are all on the side of vice, so that their inflammable contents fall upon them like sparks of fire on a train of gunpowder. What, then, must be the effect of an annual issue of nearly 30,000,000 of pol-

* “ Power of the Press,” pp. 13, 14, 15.

luting publications, all carefully read and re-read by tens of thousands of ignorant, thoughtless mortals, who are prejudiced against the truth, and who are glad to discover any argument, however sophistical, that will allow them to indulge without control their vitiated tastes and depraved passions?

A fifth cause of Britain's spiritual degradation is her wide-spread poverty.—Notwithstanding of her riches and resources, yet vast numbers of her teeming population are either absolute paupers, or bordering on pauperism. In England, there are 1,500,000 of the former class, and in Scotland, 200,000, making a total of 1,700,000. In addition to this host dependent on eleemosynary aid, there are large bodies of the labouring classes who are little superior, being generally in great pecuniary embarrassments, and often obliged to pawn their holiday apparel to obtain the means of subsistence. The impoverished condition of the bulk of these may, doubtless, be traced to their improvidence, intemperance, and profligacy;—not a few of them, however, are so irregularly employed, and when employed so inadequately remunerated, that they cannot help hard poverty's approach. However industrious, economical, and provident, the earnings of many are so utterly inadequate to procure food and raiment for themselves and families, that they are often reduced to the greatest straits—often obliged to maintain a constant struggle for the barest necessities of life. To whatever causes poverty may be ascribed, none can deny its lamentable prevalence.

Now, it is very obvious that this abounding indigence must contribute largely to our national irreligion and ungodliness. It tells most unfavourably on those who

feel its pressure. Buffeted on the rough billows of adversity, and often obliged to sit down at meal-time to an almost empty board, they stand exposed to many influences hostile to religion, and not unfrequently sink into a state of listless indifference. Such of them as were church-goers, too generally either part with their Sabbath-day raiment to procure bodily sustenance, or fail in their endeavours to renew the thread-bare suit, and thus are tempted to withdraw themselves from the sanctuary. Though they should resist this temptation, yet we are aware many readily yield to it; we are aware that multitudes forsake the house of God as soon as they cannot afford to dress like their neighbours. Who, accustomed to domiciliary visitation, does not know that want of suitable clothing is the reason assigned by most of our Sabbath profaners for their conduct? And what minister, accustomed to labour in a manufacturing locality, does not know, that when a season of commercial depression arrives, several of his hearers vacate their accustomed pews, some of whom never return? Poverty, moreover, compels its victims to betake themselves to cheap dwellings, where they are obliged to herd together like cattle, and where they are thrown into the company of ungodly associates. It is by means of crowded lodgings, in contaminating neighbourhoods, that some who once made a profession, and exhibited even hopeful symptoms, are not only robbed of whatever good principles they may have possessed, but initiated in the worst mysteries of depraved human nature. Mixing with the vile and unprincipled, and lured into wicked practices for the sake of gain, they sink into the lowest state of animalism, and give unbridled license to every appetite and passion. And, in addition to what

has been stated, starvation and nakedness tend, in various ways, too tedious to enumerate, to sour the temper, to deaden the feelings, to lead into temptation, and to brutalize the whole man. We willingly admit that some are very poor and very pious—that some, amidst the depths of penury, are to be found who are established in the faith, growing in grace, and ripening for glory. These, however, are exceptional cases. Those in any measure acquainted with the indigent classes, are well aware that want is even more hurtful to piety than wealth; and that Agur's prayer, "Give me neither poverty nor riches," should be fervently poured forth by all desirous to lead a godly life, and to prepare themselves for a happy eternity.

A sixth cause of Britain's irreligion is intemperance nourished by the usage system, and the facilities every where afforded for indulgence in alcoholic stimulants.—All know that the drinking customs of this land are numerous, being interwoven with most of the transactions and courtesies of life. All know, too, that taverns of every description largely abound. In England, Scotland, and Wales, their number is estimated at 120,000, or one to every 30 families. In Glasgow, in 1832, there was one to every 14 families; and in Dumbarton, one to every 11. As stated by the Rev. Mr Montgomery of Innerleithen, in an admirable report presented to the Free Church Synod of Lothian and Tweeddale in May last, there is at present in Edinburgh 960 licensed public-houses, or one for every 140 individuals, or every 28 families; and in the *quoad sacra* parish of Newhaven, with a population of 2,100, there are no fewer than 32 public-houses, or one for every 13 families. Now, in consequence of our drinking usages, and the facilities

afforded by a superabundance of public-houses for the consumption of intoxicating beverages, intemperance is rife and rampant in all parts of the kingdom—vast multitudes of all ranks, and of both sexes, are its degraded slaves. They have acquired a taste for intoxicating liquors, to gratify which they sacrifice health, wealth, and respectability. Inebriety is a very expensive indulgence, and hence its votaries generally come to poverty. Not a little of the abounding indigence is caused by abounding inebriety. Drink largely consumes the earnings of the operative, and leaves little or nothing for his own and his family's sustenance. Now, as already shown, poverty is inimical to godliness; and therefore drink, by producing poverty, produces irreligion. Even then, although its only effect was the production of indigence, it would be a fertile source of national degeneracy. But, besides being the teeming parent of want, it is likewise the teeming parent of all that is evil—the fruitful source of every thing that degrades and demoralizes. It drowns the voice of reason, gives force and activity to every animal passion, deadens every moral sensibility, creates an indisposition for eternal verities, and hurries men onward to the commission of every crime. In short, it is one of the prime agents of the great deceiver; it is the sunken reef on which many a gallant vessel has foundered and perished; it is the upas tree which covers the gospel field with its poisonous branches, and sheds its baneful influences far and wide. This is so self-evident, as to be felt and deplored by all who have the welfare of Christ's kingdom at heart, and who are really interested in the evangelization of this realm. Dr Henderson, as he states in his lecture on prevailing evils, asked his friend and fel-

low-labourer, Mr Wilson, to give him his thoughts on the causes of irreligion in the parish, and requested him to take a day or two to think of the subject. His reply was, "Intemperance is the great cause; *that* drink is the ruin of every thing." A similar answer was returned to the writer, on asking a sagacious house-factor, lately deceased, as to the cause of the great wickedness that prevails in Johnstone. "Drink," he replied, "is the great cause; we will never grow better till we become more sober." Farther, at a meeting of the Scottish Temperance League, held in the City Hall of Glasgow, December 1848, the Chairman read the following document, signed by Mr Coie and thirty of the city missionaries, to the following effect:—"We, the undersigned city missionaries, give it as our deliberate and decided conviction, that the drinking of intoxicating liquors is the cause of a very large amount of the poverty, wretchedness, and wickedness, which are so fearfully prevalent in many parts of the city: that whilst such drinking, by keeping thousands from forming and maintaining church-going habits, thus renders our labours more necessary, it is, at the same time, the greatest external barrier to their successful prosecution; and that the present drinking usages of society being allowed to remain, any scheme for ameliorating the physical, intellectual, moral, and religious condition of the great masses of the people, must, to a great extent, prove abortive."

A seventh cause is to be found in our towns and larger villages.—These are the hot-beds of vice and the headquarters of ungodliness, the fosterers of wickedness in some of its most revolting developments. The inhabitants of a country district or rural village are all known to each other, and subjected to one another's inspection

and animadversion, and hence are almost compelled to pay some little regard to outward propriety of demeanour. But as soon as they migrate into our large cities, they are unknown and unnoticed; like a few drops of water falling into the ocean, they mix with the mass and are lost to observation, and thus escape the surveillance of a whole neighbourhood. All, in short, who reside in populous towns live in comparative obscurity, and provided they do not commit a breach of the peace, and thereby provoke the interference of the authorities, may do what they please, without either the recognition or comment of neighbours.

Unknown, and struggling mayhap with poverty, too many of them forsake the house of God, grow indifferent about character, and give themselves up to the devices of their own imagination. Then, farther, while the denizens of our crowded cities have no scrutinizing eye upon them, and may thus commit sin unheeded and unchecked, they dwell in the midst of moral pollution, and are allured by every form of temptation. On either side of them, the wicked riot and revel, and around their abodes are taverns, and theatres, and ball-rooms of the worst description, and also those *little hells* where chastity is outraged, and where Satan holds his orgies, slaying his unwary victims by thousands. We have the authority of Scripture for saying that brothels are the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death. Theatrical entertainments, though patronised by the noble and the wealthy, are likewise destructive of morals, and obstructive to the spread of the gospel. We cannot think of the mawkish morality of the stage, and of all its alluring accompaniments, "without having forced upon us the conviction that it is little better than

a panderer to the idleness, the immorality, and the vices of the nation," and that it has largely contributed to our national degeneracy. But there are also the penny theatres, whose captivating but detestable scenes cannot be too severely reprobated. They are the great corrupters of our juvenile citizens, who will rob and plunder to procure the means of attending them. One of the inspectors of prisons, in his thirteenth report, published about two years ago, observes—"That in the Wakefield House of Correction, the chief kind of offences for which persons are committed, are thefts, assaults, and vagrancy." And respecting the chief causes of offences, the governor of that house, as the inspector states, assigned the following:—"Few of the offences for which persons are sent to this prison, are, in my opinion, caused by want. The chief cause of crime among adult persons is drunkenness, and among juvenile prisoners, the desire to obtain the means of indulging such amusements as cheap theatres."

Such considerations go to prove that large towns, with all their temptations, have a direct tendency to foster immorality and irreligion. Observation corroborates this, proving as it does that they are the great seats of moral pollution—the forges where every form of evil is contrived and fashioned, and held up for imitation. They ought not to hold this bad pre-eminence, and they would not occupy it if they had justice done them by a Christian legislature, a Christian magistracy, and a Christian community. But, as it is, they are the resort of the owl and the bittern, and every unclean thing, and send forth in every direction a moral miasma, which pollutes the surrounding country, and retards the onward march of the gospel. Yes, while they beautify and

bless the land, while they are confessedly. It re-
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yet, at the same time, owing to mismanagement to look
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surcharging the moral atmosphere with the elements
of death.

An eighth cause of our national depravity is the frequent migrations of many of the industrious classes from one place to another.—In the time of our great grandsires, the majority of our countrymen spent their days in the place of their nativity, or in the immediate vicinity, commonly following the occupations, and walking in the footsteps of their fathers. But now, as the poet long ago said, “Tempora mutantur et nos mutamur in illis;”* now great numbers of our people leave their native homes, and migrate from one quarter of the kingdom to another, either in quest of work, or of more remunerative labour. No fault can be found with this, and no bad consequences might ensue from it, if, by and by, they were enabled to locate themselves in some particular spot, where they might find permanent employment, and where they might build and tenant their own cottage, form enduring friendships, attach themselves to some particular congregation, and obtain for themselves in reality, “a local habitation and a name.” Many doubtless thus act, and become the most industrious, most orderly, and most virtuous of the working classes. Others, however, and these not a few, frequently through stern necessity, go on removing from place to place during the whole of their lifetime. These incessant migrations, which are often compulsory, as the labouring man must seek out for the means of earning

* “Times are changed, and we are changed in them.”

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Such considerations go to prove that large towns, with all their temptations, have a direct tendency to foster immorality and irreligion. Observation corroborates this, proving as it does that they are the great seats of moral pollution—the forges where every form of evil is contrived and fashioned, and held up for imitation. They ought not to hold this bad pre-eminence, and they would not occupy it if they had justice done them by a Christian legislature, a Christian magistracy, and a Christian community. But, as it is, they are the resort of the owl and the bittern, and every unclean thing, and send forth in every direction a moral miasma, which pollutes the surrounding country, and retards the onward march of the gospel. Yes, while they beautify and

bless the land, while they are confessedly. It re-of commerce, intelligence, refinement, and and teaches yet, at the same time, owing to mismanagement to look engender and circulate all that is base and corrupting of surcharging the moral atmosphere with the elements of death.

An eighth cause of our national depravity is the frequent migrations of many of the industrious classes from one place to another.—In the time of our great grandsires, the majority of our countrymen spent their days in the place of their nativity, or in the immediate vicinity, com-monly following the occupations, and walking in the foot-steps of their fathers. But now, as the poet long ago said, “Tempora mutantur et nos mutamur in illis;”* now great numbers of our people leave their native homes, and migrate from one quarter of the kingdom to another, either in quest of work, or of more remunerative labour. No fault can be found with this, and no bad conse-quences might ensue from it, if, by and by, they were enabled to locate themselves in some particular spot, where they might find permanent employment, and where they might build and tenant their own cottage, form enduring friendships, attach themselves to some particular congregation, and obtain for themselves in reality, “a local habitation and a name.” Many doubt-less thus act, and become the most industrious, most orderly, and most virtuous of the working classes. Others, however, and these not a few, frequently through stern necessity, go on removing from place to place during the whole of their lifetime. These inces-sant migrations, which are often compulsory, as the labouring man must seek out for the means of earning

* “Times are changed, and we are changed in them.”

tion? It is undoubtedly one great cause of that abounding abject poverty which benumbs the soul, leads into temptation, superinduces recklessness and indifference, and widens the field of spiritual destitution. Defrauded of what is just and equal, and left to struggle with starvation and nakedness, without one kindly recognition from their superiors, too many of the lower orders look upon society as leagued against them, and distrust every one but the demagogue, who harangues them on some plausible but deceptive plan of bettering their condition. Oh! how many now walking in the way of sinners, and almost hopelessly prostrate, living for the passing hour, and sporting themselves with their own deceivings, might have been adorning the Christian character, and lending efficient support to our social institutions, if those above them had sympathised with their condition, and acted under God as the lever of their elevation, and not as the dead weight of their depression!

*A tenth cause, closely connected with the last, is the great neglect of the spiritually destitute masses, by all ranks of professors.—*It is not ministers only who are to labour in the vineyard, and to reclaim its neglected wastes. They are doubtless the principal gospel pioneers, but Christian laymen should co-operate with them, giving them what assistance they can. To say with Cain, “Am I my brother’s keeper,” betrays, if not lurking infidelity, at least an unsanctified heart. And it is scarcely necessary to state, that all professing Christians can render Christ’s ambassadors efficient aid in cultivating the wide field of home heathenism. Though they were even to do nothing more than merely to pay an occasional visit to their careless neighbours, and to take some interest in their temporal welfare, they would

thereby conciliate their good will, and prepare them for listening to the offer of salvation. Professors in general, particularly those of them who are influential, might in this way alone be eminently serviceable. Indeed, as has recently been stated, it is because the higher classes generally sympathize so little with the lower, that many in straitened circumstances get soured and hardened, and become indifferent both about this world and the next. But, besides sympathizing with the poor and afflicted, and trying to alleviate their distresses, those who know the truth can tell them of their sinfulness and their danger, and can point them to the Saviour; they can speak to them of that virulent disease that rankles in their veins, and of that Balm of Gilead, its only effectual antidote. While, however, the followers of the Lamb may, and ought to do good, and to communicate, yet how many of every sect frequent the sanctuary, and partake even of the holy communion, who really do nothing for the reclamation of their benighted countrymen! Perhaps they may lament over their ungodliness and recklessness, or it may be they may throw a mite into the plate when a collection is being made for a ragged school, or a city mission, but they never gird themselves for evangelistic work, and go forth to the more destitute localities of their respective neighbourhoods, there to enter the wretched hovels of the ignorant, and the destitute, for sympathizing with their hard lot, and for pressing home upon the heart and conscience, the necessity of attending to the one thing needful, and of preparing for that eternal world on which they must soon enter. Oh! who can tell how much this criminal neglect has widened the boundaries of home heathenism! When it is seriously considered,

we cease to wonder that sullen feelings have been engendered among the poor, and that large districts are over-run with paganism which might have been blooming with the fruits of righteousness, to the praise and glory of God our Father, and his Son Jesus Christ.

An eleventh cause, which has had its own share of unhappy influence in swelling the numbers of the ungodly, is the lamentable neglect of parental duty.—Not a few parents, who make a profession of religion, are wonderfully indifferent about the training of their children. Thousands on whom the care of families is devolved, pay little regard either to their secular or religious education. Instead of making every exertion to procure for them that elementary instruction so intimately connected with their happiness, they allow them to fritter away the time they should be attending school, and laying in a stock of knowledge for riper years. Many, on the other hand, who so far from being open to this charge, are wide awake to the advantages of a good elementary education, and who laudably toil hard to secure it for their children, fearfully neglect their godly upbringing. Heads of families without number, who frequent the sanctuary themselves, do not teach their precious charge church-going habits. The parents may be seen every Sabbath listening to the words of eternal life, and encompassing the holy table, as often as the communion season comes round, while those God hath given them, and for whom they are bound to care, may be simultaneously observed running wild on the street, to the great scandal of religion, and their own indelible disgrace. Again, not a few who sustain the parental relation may be found, who occasionally bring their youthful progeny along with them to public wor-

ship, but who do little else for training them up in the way they should go. Perhaps they never bow the knee with them around the family altar, or, should they keep up the form of domestic worship, they neglect catechetical instruction, and those various means which, under God, are fitted to leaven the tender minds of their offspring with divine truth. Indeed, it is the fewest number of even professedly Christian parents who are using every effort to bring their little ones to Jesus—who are prayerfully and perseveringly endeavouring, by precept and example combined, to cultivate their hearts, to quicken their sense of obligation and duty, and to make them enlightened, earnest Christians, that as they grow in stature they may grow in favour with God and man, and be enabled, by divine assistance, to remain steadfast amidst the allurements and temptations among which, if spared, they will soon be cast, and which it will require all their virtue to resist and overcome. And, oh! when these considerations are duly pondered—when we think how little care many professing Christian parents bestow on the spiritual culture of those they love—when we think of the great neglect of family worship, family instruction, and family discipline, we perceive an element powerfully operative in augmenting the number of those miserable creatures who have cast off all religious restraint, and are fast drifting to an undone eternity. A large share, doubtless, of prevailing ungodliness is chargeable on slothful pastors, and no inconsiderable share of it imputable to Christians in the aggregate neglecting to visit the heathen lanes of our populous towns; but unquestionably those householders who make no adequate effort to diffuse through the family circle the savour of the knowledge

of Christ, have to answer for far more of our home barbarism, than either they themselves, or mankind generally, are apt to allow. Their hearths and homes are its great nurseries, its unceasing feeders. When those whose religious culture is comparatively neglected, enter on the arena of public life, where vice allures, and dangerous examples operate, they too often surrender themselves to unlawful pleasures, and run to the extreme of riot and ungodliness. Oh! that the guardians of youth would lay this seriously to heart—oh! that they would remember, that if they neglect betimes to train up their children for God, and to fortify them by religion against the might and deceitfulness of sin, they will easily yield to every excitement, and every temptation, and may, ere many years elapse, be numbered among those who not only stand in the way of sinners, but also sit in the seat of the scornful!

The coldness and inconsistency of professors is another cause, and the last we shall mention, which operates perniciously on the world, and augments the number of daring transgressors.—There are not many lively, devoted Christians to be found in the whole kingdom. A very large proportion of those who assume the Christian name are notorious for their lifelessness and inactivity. Their piety is dwarfed and stunted. Some of them are even characterised by shameful inconsistencies. This Sabbath they may be seen hanging on the lips of the preacher, and the next reeling through the effect of the intoxicating draught; to-day they may be heard celebrating the praises of God, and to-morrow using his name to give emphasis to an oath; at one time they may seem to be journeying heavenward, and at another to be pursuing the downward path to destruction. Mul-

titudes, indeed, save by the shadowy line of profession, are scarcely distinguishable from non-professors who avowedly care for none of these things. This nominalism tells prejudicially on the godless masses, who estimate Christianity, not as it stands embodied in the volume of inspiration, but as it is reflected in the demeanour of its professors, especially in the walk and conversation of those of them whose faults and failings are the most palpable and glaring: viewing religion through this discoloured, distorted medium, they are repelled from it, and from all its advocates. Seeing that the great body of professors walk inconsistently, being in reality little better than themselves, they rashly conclude that there is no reality in Christianity, and that it would be arrant folly for them to submit to its restraints. Pointing to their neighbours who attend divine ordinances, they are often heard to say, “What good will it do us to worship along with these people, as they are no better than ourselves, who make Sabbath a day of recreation, and who allow religion to take care of itself.” This sophistical mode of argumentation is very common and very injurious. It tells even among those who do not trouble themselves to clothe it in words, and to throw it into the form of a syllogism; and while the bad example of every nominalist tends to confirm the infidel in his opinions, and to widen the ranks of ungodliness, the defective example of such professors as are prominent, either by rank or office, is still more deadening and corrupting. Nobles, judges, and magistrates, who professedly adhere to Christianity, and ministers of the gospel, who are its authorized expounders, are cities set upon a hill; and therefore, if there is any palpable flaw in their conduct, it operates far and

wide in unsettling anxious inquirers, and in confirming the wicked in their wickedness. 'This is too obvious to require either confirmation or illustration. It is devoutly to be wished, that all who attach themselves to the church, and maintain a Christian profession, would remember that any inconsistency, any impropriety on their part, is a powerful instrument of evil, which all their labours and instructions will never sufficiently counteract.

Such are a few of the principal causes of the prevailing spiritual destitution. Lately, when a fell epidemic was traversing the land, and when, as often happened, it broke out in those parts of our populous towns where crowded thoroughfares, ill-ventilated houses, defective drainage, and cess-pools of every description abounded, we saw it remarked in almost every paper we lifted, "It is little wonder that it should rage with severity in localities like these, *as there were present all the elements necessary for the creation of pestilence.*" And when we duly consider the causes that have passed under review, when we pause and reflect on the deficiency of the means of moral and religious instruction, the inefficiency of the ministry, the influx of infidelity, the licentiousness of the press, raging intemperance, abounding poverty, neglect of parental duty, and so forth, do we not behold in full operation *all the elements necessary for the creation of a national moral pestilence?* and need we be astonished that nearly the half of our populace are deeply infected by it, and fast sinking under its deadly grasp? Instead of wondering at the extent of ungodliness, when its springs are so numerous and powerful, we should rather wonder that it has not overmastered Christianity, and driven it

from our borders, turning the whole nation into a pestilential region, where nothing lived that was pure and lovely and of good report. And assuredly had not He who checked the ravages of the plague, and who alone can narrow and lessen the fountains of evil, befriended us, and fought on our side, the whole country would have been converted into a vast moral desert, without one solitary oasis on which to rest, and in which to rejoice. Be it ours to praise and thank the Giver of every good and perfect gift, and the Defender of kingdoms, for his gracious interference in our behalf, and for the godliness that prevails in our midst ; giving us good ground to hope that, if we be up and doing, He will bless us still more abundantly, making us a people on whose foreheads may be seen engraven, in legible characters, "Holiness to the Lord," and rendering our feeble efforts instrumental in hastening the time when, as there is but one great Shepherd, there shall be but one great sheepfold.

CHAPTER III.

PRINCIPAL REMEDIAL MEASURES.

“ Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.”—LUKE xiv. 23.

IT has been shown, that nearly a half of our entire population make no visible profession of religion, many of whom have lost all self-respect, and have sunk to the lowest depth of moral degradation. Some of the chief causes have also been enumerated that have produced this frightfully demoralized state, which pollutes and degrades our beloved land, and endangers the stability of our time-hallowed institutions—and, aware of the disease and its sources, are we merely to utter a few words of lamentation, and to allow it to prey on the vitals of the country without attempting to devise and apply an efficacious remedy? This would be the acme at once of selfishness and infatuation.

When we speak of devising a remedy, it is solely in regard to application, as the only cure is clearly revealed in Scripture—that, namely, which Christ has prepared with his own blood, and labelled with his own name. It is this costly balm alone that can reach the seat of the disorder which has seized our nation, and that can completely heal both its social and moral maladies. Dissociated from this, every other prescription in the shape of

mere secular education, or mere political enactment, is gross empiricism. The gospel is our only restorative—the gospel, and the gospel alone, can purify, exalt, and bless this and every other land. It is Heaven's panacea for all the ills of life. By some politicians and philosophers this is entirely overlooked—by others, flatly denied ; but these men, notwithstanding their boasted wisdom, must be as superficially acquainted with the lessons of history, as with the lessons of inspiration. Is not the inefficacy of every worldly prescription indelibly engraved on the historic page ? In ancient times, Greece was renowned for her philosophy, and Rome for her military eminence ; but withal they were corrupted to the core, and perished by the festering of their own putrescence. In modern times, a neighbouring kingdom attained great renown, both in arts and arms, and proclaimed to the world that by learning and legislation she would turn her territory into an elysium, and weave an immortal wreath around her brow. She made the experiment, and who does not know that ever since she has resembled the troubled ocean, and that at this moment she is emerging from her third great revolution, wasted with her own crimes, and reeking with her own blood. If France fail to teach purblind utilitarians the futility of all human inventions for regulating and elevating a nation, it is vain to attempt conviction by argument. The intellect that resists the force of facts, it is a waste of time and words to ply with the rules of logic. But history, besides teaching the inefficiency of every worldly cure for effecting the moral regeneration and permanent happiness of society, goes to prove that the gospel, as far as it has been tried, has drained off men's fetid humours,

and elevated them socially, intellectually, morally, and spiritually. In proportion as any country has opened its arms to the gospel, and embraced its holy precepts, has it risen in political importance, and exhibited the best specimen of a happy and a contented people. Britain, with all its faults, affords a noble illustration of this. She has nationally adopted a Protestant creed, and has partially yielded to its purifying and transforming influences; and the result is, that her greatness and happiness are exactly proportionate to the little leaven of truth which effectually works within her. As far as observation extends, nothing is wanting to complete her grandeur and felicity, but the diffusion throughout her length and breadth of the same gospel she has received and professes to revere.

If, then, men would only read history aright, they could scarcely fail to perceive, that the gospel alone is that which can really elevate and benefit mankind, and, therefore, that alone which can really exalt and beautify and bless the land of our fathers. And by the gospel is meant that divine method of salvation which Christ Jesus, the Son of God, wrought out by his obedience unto death, providing for the reconciliation of God to man, consistently with the harmony of the divine attributes and the claims of the divine law. This alone is the gospel, which, when savingly embraced, will save and sanctify the soul, and raise the nation in the scale of morality and happiness; this alone is the undiluted truth that will reach the heart of the nation, and make it beat with new impulses, which will tell favourably on its entire framework, and pour on every side the choicest blessings. Every thing but this will fail even to reform the moral habits of the people, far less to sanctify and

save them. In proof of what has just been stated, let it suffice to quote the remarkable testimony of the lamented Chalmers, as contained in his farewell address to his parishioners on leaving Kilmany, his first charge, where he laboured for twelve years without knowing, and, consequently, without preaching the truth. In that valedictory sermon he uses the following language, which the remark now made will enable our readers to understand :—“ And here I cannot but record the effect of an actual though undesigned experiment which I prosecuted for twelve years among you. For the greatest part of that time I could expatiate on the meanness of dishonesty and the villany of falsehood, on the despicable arts of calumny ; in a word, upon all those diversities of character which awaken the natural indignation of the human heart against the pests and disturbers of society. Even at that time I certainly did press the reformation of honour and truth and integrity among my people ; but I never heard of any such reformation being effected amongst them. If there was any thing at all brought about in this way, it was more than ever I got any account of. I am now sensible that all the vehemence with which I urged the virtues and proprieties of social life, had not the weight of a feather on the moral habits of my parishioners, and it was not till I got impressed with the thorough alienation of the heart in all its desires and affections from God ; it was not till reconciliation with him became the distinct and prominent object of my ministerial exertions ; it was not until I took the scriptural mode of laying the method of reconciliation before them ; it was not till the free offer of forgiveness, through the blood of Jesus urged upon their acceptance, and the Holy Spirit given

through the channel of Christ's mediatorship withal, set before them as the unceasing object of their hope—it was not, in one word, till the contemplation of my people was turned to those great and essential elements in the business of the soul, providing for its interests with God and the concerns of eternity, that I ever heard of those subordinate reformations which I afore-time made my earnest and my zealous, but at the same time, I am afraid, the ultimate object of my earlier ministrations." It appears, then, from this ingenuous confession of that departed philanthropist, who stamped his image on the age in which he lived, that nothing but the gospel in its native purity can morally elevate, and therefore temporally benefit any society of men. In other words, it teaches, that before you can moralize a people, and put them in possession of the highest temporal blessings, you must first evangelize them. Men must first be Christianized before they can nationally enjoy the collateral benefits of Christianity. And if nothing but a reception of the pure gospel will procure its lower advantages, nothing else, we may rest assured, will procure its higher—nothing else will appease the wrath of an offended God, introduce into his favour, and prepare for his everlasting enjoyment. If men must be evangelized before they can be moralized, how much more must they be evangelized before they can enjoy the smiles of a reconciled Father, and be fitted for dwelling in the sinless abode of the blessed ?

Having thus adverted to the only remedy which, when applied to a nation, evangelizes and exalts it, let us now consider what means should be adopted by those among us who value the gospel, for making it bear with effect on the neglected and degraded masses, so that Britain,

with God's blessing, may be wholly evangelized, and a perennial fountain opened up within her, which shall diffuse peace and purity and joyfulness to her remotest extremities.

The longer we ponder this important subject, we are more and more convinced that remedial measures, *founded on the basis* of the ancient Scottish system, are best calculated to evangelize the British empire. According to that system, Scotland was divided into parishes containing not more than 1,000 people, young and old. In each of these manageable parishes, there was erected a church, furnished with a resident minister, surrounded and assisted by a noble staff of office-bearers, and a school superintended by a qualified schoolmaster. The school was always built beside the church, as its appropriate nursery, due provision being made that the instruction therein imparted should be thoroughly impregnated with religion, so that youth under the care of a pious teacher might receive a sound education, and be prepared for usefulness here and glory hereafter. Along with the ecclesiastical apparatus now mentioned, which nobly provided for the intellectual, moral, and spiritual culture of the people, there was also a wise provision for supplying the wants of the virtuous poor, by means of which they were liberally supported without the imposition of a poor-law. Waving, however, a consideration of this part of the time-tried plan of our forefathers, we desire to fix attention on that part of it which, viewing man as an intellectual, moral, and religious being, erected suitable machinery for his cultivation as such in all parts of the kingdom. This parochial system in a very short period enlightened, civilized, and evangelized the whole land. It placed

Scotland, in the course of twenty years, at the head of all nations for intelligence, morality, and piety. And we venture to affirm, that if this parochial economy had been purely administered, zealously wrought, and carefully adjusted and expanded, to suit an ever-increasing population and the march of intellect, the northern part of the island, instead of exhibiting an amount of spiritual destitution sufficient to draw tears from every Christian eye, and groans from every Christian heart, would have been thoroughly leavened with Christianity, and redolent of every heavenly grace.

Here, then, is a remedial measure for the evangelization of town and country, which bears the stamp of sound philosophy and long-tried experience, and which, in all its *essential features*, stands ready for our adoption. By these features, we mean the division of the kingdom into manageable sections, with their intellectual, moral, and spiritual machinery, *apart from any necessary dependence on national aid*. A state-endowment, however, for evangelical churches, we would not absolutely deprecate, **IF BESTOWED WITHOUT INTERFERING WITH THEIR SPIRITUAL LIBERTY**; and a state-endowment for elementary schools of the right sort, we would gladly hail; but we regard any such endowment, especially for churches, merely as a useful appendage to the measure we are advocating, not an essential part of it—inasmuch as the requisite funds may be obtained from those pervaded and actuated by Christian principle. Believing this, and believing farther, that, in present circumstances, endowments for disestablished churches are far from being desirable, and would not be accepted, the ecclesiastical system of our forefathers, adapted to our national necessities, and our intellectual require-

ments, but without, like it, drawing any support from the treasury, except, if possible, for schools, is substantially the remedy we would prescribe for healing our sin-laden and wo-stricken masses, who know not the nature of the disease that rankles in their veins, and that makes them go mourning all the day. This, we repeat, is the groundwork of those remedial measures we would bring forward and recommend, as capable of improving all our moral wastes, and of placing Britain's true elevation on a stable basis. Other useful plans may be devised and vigorously wrought; but every one of them should be subordinated to the one now indicated, and should contemplate something approaching to it as the optimism of home-evangelization.

Attached as we are to the ancient Scottish system, we would not rigidly adhere to divisions containing exactly 1,000 inhabitants. All we contend for is, sections neither too large nor too small—manageable sections, whose population shall suffice to form an ordinary congregation, averaging from 800 to 1,200. It were well if we had none below the former, and none above the latter, as both very small and very large congregations are productive of evil results, and very undesirable.

We now proceed to show how the plan we are recommending would adapt itself to the existing denominationalism, and how, when either wholly or partially adopted, it should be systematically and efficiently wrought, so as, with God's blessing, to stem the torrent of ungodliness, and to diffuse the gospel throughout all our borders. Its adoption would not materially interfere with the present ecclesiastical arrangements of the various sects, while it would eminently serve to

heal Zion's divisions, and to further that union among the churches, which can neither be too earnestly supplicated nor too diligently promoted. A detailed explanation will serve to make these things clear, and thus help to recommend it.

Suppose, for example, it was thought of as suitable for a particular town, then a public meeting summoned by citation from every pulpit should be held, at which a committee composed of members from all the evangelical denominations willing to co-operate should be appointed, with power to divide the place into manageable sections, containing each about 2,000 souls. After this committee had satisfactorily completed its task, all the office-bearers of the different congregations willing to co-operate should meet along with it, and amicably allocate one division to each co-operating congregation, as its own *quoad sacra* parish. In making that allocation, it would be highly desirable that reference should be had to the situation of the several churches, that as far as possible each church might have a contiguous district assigned to it. Next to the contiguity of the churches, their prosperity might advantageously be taken into account in marking off their boundaries. If there were more divisions or parishes ecclesiastical than existing congregations, as there always will be in every town of any size, means should be employed by those who have begun the good work to form new congregations, with all the necessary intellectual, moral, and spiritual apparatus, so that there may be church and school accommodation, and pastoral superintendence, for the entire community.

The place being divided, and the various sections allocated, as just stated, then operations should be

immediately commenced by every fully equipped congregation. And though these must necessarily vary, according to circumstances, yet I would suggest the following method as the best. The minister, who is the principal spiritual labourer, should thoroughly visit all the families in his district, ascertaining by personal inspection and personal inquiry how many of them attended and how many of them did not attend public worship; what children were and what children were not receiving instruction, together with the capabilities of the resident teachers; what causes chiefly operated in demoralizing the neighbourhood, and what were its general characteristics. From a scrutinizing personal survey he should, in short, construct an *ecclesiastical map* of his limited territory. Having carefully done this, he should next originate such measures for the true elevation of his district as its spiritual necessities seem to demand. He should devote a portion of his leisure to the domiciliary visitation of those who neglect religious ordinances, and should faithfully and suitably address them. Besides visiting each careless household separately, he should now and again collect all the church-deserting inhabitants of the same district into some roomy apartment, and there expound to them the way of God with all affection and simplicity—warning them, at the same time, of their danger, and beseeching them to betake themselves without delay to Him who is a covert from the storm, and a hiding-place from the tempest. The minister should also attend to the educational wants of his district, setting in operation, as far as may be in his power, both day and Sabbath schools, and exercising over them a vigilant superintendence. He should never forget, that the young

are a hopeful field, whose assiduous cultivation will amply reward the labour bestowed upon it, and whose neglect will render abortive every other mode of home-evangelization.

While the minister is the principal cultivator of the neglected soil, he should not be the only one. His efforts should be heartily seconded by all his hearers who have the requisite time and ability. That they may render him efficient help in this great work of Christian philanthropy, the district or *quoad sacra* parish should be divided into several subdivisions, and distributed among his willing coadjutors, or rather a portion of them, as it would be desirable, in large towns particularly, that each congregation should be able to spare a few qualified labourers for *extra parochial work*. In some of these subdivisions there might be two, in others three, four, five, six, or even a dozen families, who were living utterly regardless of divine things. The allocation of these small charges could be regulated by the experience of the lay-labourers, and the time they had to devote to evangelistic efforts. But what duties, it may be asked, would they have to perform toward these neglected and neglectful families? They would be expected to visit them frequently, to make themselves intimately acquainted with their several histories, to converse with them about their temporal and eternal wellbeing, to persuade them to attend the house of God, to govern their households on Christian principles, to give their children a sound religious education, and, in a word, to endeavour in every possible way to promote their best interests, both for time and eternity. One duty specially required at their hands would be, to call on those with whose spiritual oversight they

were in some measure entrusted, the night the minister was to address them in the district meeting, to remind them of it, and to secure their attendance.

No rare gifts are required for labours of love like these. Nor, if systematically performed, would they occupy more time than the great bulk of mankind have to spare. Two or three hours per week would suffice, after the first visitation was completed; and hence there are but few who could not afford time sufficient for undertaking the charge of one subdivision, and acting under the minister as its spiritual superintendent. Such a system of visitation, if judiciously made and regularly followed out, would, doubtless, with God's blessing, be productive of the best results. It is well known, that though families may have long absented themselves from the public ordinances of religion, and sunk low in the scale of morality, they will, nevertheless, not generally refuse the visit of a pious neighbour, but give him a hearty welcome, and consider themselves greatly indebted to him for his friendly attention. Such a visit to many may in itself be the means of partially restoring them to that self-respect which they have totally lost; it will have the tendency of making them thus reason with themselves, "We are not yet altogether outcasts, else we would not thus be looked after and cared for; may we not hope that happiness is yet in store for us!"

To the fore-mentioned plan it may be objected, that most ministers require all their time and strength for pulpit preparation and pastoral duty, and that to enter on any new field of labour, such as that described, would be injurious alike to themselves and to their congregations. This objection, we admit, appears at

first sight to be insuperable, as zealous pastors scarcely have an unoccupied hour, and as nothing should be allowed materially to interfere with their strictly congregational duties; but feasible and formidable as it looks, there are several considerations which, when duly weighed, serve to obviate it. In adopting the scheme we are advocating, it is to be supposed that many districts in the better-conditioned parts of every town will contain but a sprinkling of the outcast population. Now, a few of these may lie in the neighbourhood of the most prosperous churches, and might with propriety be assigned to them, so that their spiritual overseers might without much difficulty give the necessary superintendence; moreover, it may be expected that all clergymen who have large well-trained congregations, will be so efficiently aided by their people, that any additional labour they may have to perform, will not be grievously burdensome. Those ministers, on the other hand, whose churches are but partially filled, will have more time for home missionary operations than those whose churches are overcrowded, and who, if they are earnest pastors, must be much occupied with the visitation of their numerous membership; besides, there is a peculiar obligation resting on the ministers of half-filled churches, to employ themselves in the work of home evangelization, that *by aggressive as well as attractive influences*, they may endeavour to fill their places of worship. And surely they are not stepping out of their appropriate sphere of pastoral duty, when besides visiting their own members, they concentrate their efforts on a particular district, visiting from house to house such as have forgotten their church-going habits. Their labours, moreover, in this department, will be

lightened by the assistance of their own hearers. Those of their elders and people whose hearts the Lord has touched will come to their help, and will greatly aid them in evangelizing the territory assigned to their care. Such and similar considerations obviate the objections we are combating. In addition, let me with due deference remind my brethren in the ministry, that example goes before precept, and that if we wish to stir up our hearers to evangelistic labour, we must by actions as well as exhortations persuade them to try it; we must put our hands to the work of excavation, as well as give directions for its performance; we must, in a word, *lead as well as point the way.*

To avoid misapprehension, it is right to notice that the territorial plan now sketched repudiates any unwarrantable interference with pastors and their respective flocks. Based on the principle that each church is to have a workable territory assigned to its supervision, it nevertheless does not contemplate preventing those residing therein from worshipping where they choose, and from receiving the pastoral visits of their own spiritual instructors, nor in any way subjecting its church-going inhabitants to the visitation and control of the territorial minister. No, it proposes merely investing the church to which it is allocated with the spiritual oversight of those of its inhabitants who make no profession of religion, and for taking such steps as have been delineated for their enlightenment and conversion. And farther still, it would not stringently confine the evangelistic labours of a minister to his own district; he might at pleasure freely pass into his neighbour's, without, as of old, being either rendered amenable to discipline, or frowned upon as a hot-headed

innovator. It would, of course, be expected that he should devote himself principally to his own little territory, which would generally be found sufficient; but still he might, as occasion offered, evangelize where he pleased, without let or hindrance. Above all, if he succeeded in cultivating his own small corner of the vineyard, in clearing it of all its rubbish, and of converting it into a fertile field, he would be heartily welcomed, as a helper, to any of those who had been less successful.

Those districts for which there is no stated minister now demand attention. We remarked, that in most large towns there would be more divisions, or parishes ecclesiastical, than existing congregations. How are these to be leavened with the gospel? We reply, that all the co-operating congregations should meet, and prayerfully deliberate on this grave matter. Some of the expedients they might employ, for the spiritual elevation of these surplus sections, we shall briefly mention.

One method is this:—Those who have set about the good work might find among themselves several possessed of a missionary spirit and suitable qualifications, who could be entrusted with the care of one or more of these divisions. Suppose 20 such individuals were willing to be thus employed, they might have one destitute district of 2,000 people, or 400 families, assigned to their special charge, as a sphere of evangelistic labour. But it may be asked, What coul they do? After subdividing their allotment among themselves, they could periodically visit all its out-field residents—expounding unto them the Word of God—entreating them to frequent the sanctuary—and beseeching them to turn from their wickedness and to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

They might also institute prayer-meetings in their respective subdivisions, and open Sabbath schools. Nay, they might be able, by some little exertion and sacrifice, to establish a ragged school, a missionary school, or at least a common week-day school of the right kind, where the heart as well as the intellect might be cultivated. This is a mere outline of what a few devoted men might do in any uncultivated territory, which could not meanwhile be otherwise supplied with labourers. The ground once broke, they would discover ways and means for themselves of cultivating their barren waste, or rather, I should say, of doing something towards its cultivation, till a regular staff of office-bearers could be procured.

Another mode is the following:—A strong congregation, in addition to its own, might take one or more unoccupied districts under its fostering care, for whose culture it might procure a missionary or missionaries, and likewise a teacher or teachers. A large town congregation could, without great difficulty, raise the necessary funds for the support of these agents. Not a few, moreover, of its members could aid these qualified instructors, by endeavouring to prevail on the careless to attend the addresses of the missionary, and to send their children to the school opened for their benefit. By domiciliary visitation, by deeds of active benevolence, and by ingratiating sympathy, they might powerfully help to fill the preaching station and the week-day and Sabbath schools. If, then, a strong congregation would select a particular district, they might, as now specified, take initial steps toward the formation of a regular ministerial charge.

There is still another method for unoccupied dis-

tricts, and undoubtedly the best, where the requisite funds can be obtained, and that is, the immediate erection of an entire ecclesiastical apparatus, together with the appointment of qualified agents for working it efficiently and permanently. This plan accords both with reason and experience. Any other, however well-devised and well-wrought, is but a preparatory expedient, and labours under many serious defects. It has lately been tried in the Westport of Edinburgh, and has succeeded admirably. A church and school were recently built in that locality, through the instrumentality of the late Dr Chalmers, and a zealous minister and efficient teachers appointed, and now there is a respectable congregation, partly composed of reclaimed outcasts, and flourishing schools, filled with happy children, whose education would have been otherwise totally neglected. What has been done in the Westport might be done throughout all the towns of the kingdom, where there is a deficiency of pastoral superintendence and church accommodation. Congregations thus formed would be greatly aided by the accession of a few pious families of respectability. A writer in the *Free Church Magazine* has justly remarked, "It would be vastly for the advantage of a new congregation in a poor locality to have a few families of the better class in connection with it. They would go far to render the congregation independent, both in point of pecuniary resources and Christian agency; they would be an infinite comfort and encouragement to the minister—their presence would prepare the way for families of the same rank joining the congregation—and the mere fact of their having left some splendid congregation to be of service to their poorer brethren, would give a

weight and force to their exhortations, that would carry them at once to the hearts of the people whom they seek to benefit."

There are four recommendations of the remedial measures we have sketched, to which we invite special attention. *One is—they are eminently adapted to the barren, hard-beaten soil which has to be reclaimed.* Greatly similar physical soils have nevertheless marked features of dissimilarity. Some are far more difficult to be wrought than others, and require uncommon labour and no small outlay to make them productive. So is it with those spiritual soils—human hearts; with something in common, they are nevertheless characterized by great moral diversity, and demand a mode of husbandry suited to every variety. In this they all agree, that they are corrupt and alienated from God, and need to be torn up with the gospel ploughshare, in order to make them yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness. Nothing but gospel tillage will soften and subdue and convert even the most gentle and amiable of the human family; and nothing but this will ever win back to God the stiff-necked and stubborn and morally debased beings who inhabit our lanes and alleys. "It is not a system of unchristian morals, nor the meagre Christianity of those who deride as methodistical all the peculiarities of our faith, that will recall our neglected population. . . . Nothing will subdue them, but that regenerating power which goes along with the faith of the New Testament; and nothing will charm away the alienation of their spirits, but their belief in the overtures of redeeming mercy."* The method we advocate for reclaiming those who have sadly degene-

* "Memoirs of Dr Chalmers. By his Son-in-Law." Vol. ii., p. 271.

rated is founded on this belief, and has therefore a general adaptation to the soil to which it is to be applied.

But it has this farther adaptation, that it proceeds on the aggressive principle, without which no single furrow can be drawn in the hard-beaten earth of outfield ungodliness. It will not avail merely to build churches and schools, unless moral suasion be used to have them filled. Erect the theatre, and give due intimation of the performance, and crowds will congregate at the appointed hour; open the shop, and exhibit the wares, and customers, more or fewer, will not be awanting; but it fares differently with the erection of churches and schools, especially in destitute localities, as the neglected masses have little desire for intellectual improvement, and a positive distaste for religion. Qualified agents, therefore, must go out into the highways and hedges, and collect therefrom, by the force of moral compulsion, scholars for the schools and hearers for the churches. As the same great man observes, from whom we have just quoted, "The movement won't begin with our alienated population, who have fallen away from the habits and decencies of a Christian land; but, in order to bring them to Christianity, the movement must begin somewhere. The movement will not be on the side of the people themselves; it must be on the side of those who have themselves felt the power of Christianity, and wish to communicate its benefit to others. . . . There is something more necessary than a stationary apparatus. You must go forth to the people. The agent, in short, must act as a Christian missionary, his business being to go forth to the people during the week as well as employ Sabbath services."*

* "Churches and Schools for the Working Classes. By Dr Chalmers." P. 5.

A second recommendation of our plan is—it provides for the methodical thorough cultivation of the whole out-field territory. Method is necessary to insure the proper physical culture of the whole of a piece of ground of whatever extent. It is not possible to cultivate every acre of a larger or smaller tract of country, covering it with luxuriant crops, without orderly divisions and sub-divisions. It must be regularly parcelled out among qualified cultivators, so that each may occupy his own workable spot, concentrating his undivided energies thereupon. If this be neglected, and if the labourers follow their own bent, without consultation and arrangement, cultivation will proceed irregularly and unsatisfactorily. Some parts will soon be covered with all the bloom and beauty of the finest husbandry, and others will remain in their natural unproductive condition. And is not method as necessary for the moral and spiritual as for the physical culture of a larger or smaller territory? Undoubtedly. It is because this has been disregarded, it is because the spiritual husbandmen of our flourishing towns have pursued their labour very much apart, as if their interests were entirely separate, and as if all they had to do was to earn a livelihood from their tillage,—it is, we repeat, greatly owing to this that we have within the walls of the same city such vast overgrown wastes, interspersed amidst large tracts of various degrees of fertility and loveliness. Let but methodical cultivation be resorted to, let manageable districts be set apart for each congregation, and the best temporary provision made for surplus districts, and let these again be severally divided and operated upon, giving to every labourer a sufficiently small sphere, and we would rest confident that tho

extensive outstanding marshes of practical heathenism would soon be completely drained and converted into fruitful fields.

A third recommendation of this plan is—it operates through the instrumentality of church organization. It proceeds on the principle of congregational operation; of evangelizing the masses through the agency of the different churches, rather than through that of independent evangelistic associations. The one may be called the natural, the other, the artificial plan of home missions; the one is a standing plan ready with little trouble to be set, and most likely to be kept in operation till the work is accomplished—the other, like every thing artificial, requires greater labour and expense to organize and set agoing, and is much less likely to be either as efficacious or as permanent. In saying this, I would not wish to be thought as opposing town missions and other kindred societies, which have been productive of much good, and which are operating beneficially in many parts of the kingdom. Bearing willing testimony to their great value, I am yet disposed to think that congregational agency would be much more effective, just because the natural method is preferable to the artificial. That nature excels art, is every where seen in the physical world. Vegetation may be produced by forced expedients—by artificial heat and irrigation; but there is nothing ordinarily comparable to sunshine and shower, at the proper season, and in the proper climate, for imparting the greatest value and loveliness to the different products of the earth. In our hot-houses, the vine, the orange, the lemon, and other exotics, are plentifully reared; but neither as to foliage nor fruit can they stand comparison

with the same trees in those latitudes to which they are indigenous, and in which, consequently, they bloom and blossom amidst the genial influences of a native clime. And it is remarkable that, while nature in certain countries somewhat alters her ordinary mode of causing the earth to yield her increase, by employing extraordinary methods, which answer the regions in which they are employed, they would nevertheless not operate so beneficially elsewhere. In far-famed Egypt, for example, where rain seldom falls, vegetation is produced by the overflowing of the Nile at seed-time, leaving its rich deposits to fatten and fertilize the ground. This answers the purpose of agriculture in that land, so interwoven with Bible story, because there it is the way of nature, which is always the best. Let the same method be practised in this quarter of the globe ; let some river in early spring be carefully dammed up, causing its waters for a season to spread themselves over the circumjacent fields, before they are subjected to the operations of the husbandman—let this be done, and yet after all, the process will not be so effective on the British as on the Egyptian soil. As the natural method is preferable to the artificial, in regard to physical productivity, so doubtless is it in regard to spiritual fruitfulness. Now, evangelization through the medium of the church is the divinely-appointed, and therefore the natural method, and the one on that very account which should be pursued, as it has the greatest likelihood of being the most efficient.

Here we would observe, that the artificial system of home missions has been called into existence, *because the natural has failed to perform its proper functions.* Till of late, few churches acted aggressively on the surrounding

masses, and even yet, as a body, they are not putting forth their strength vigorously and unitedly. This accounts for the independent evangelistic institutions which are in full and efficient operation in many places. If, however, the evangelical churches, as churches, would do their duty more faithfully and harmoniously, these voluntary institutions would not be needed. David Nasmith, the founder of city missions, was decidedly of this persuasion at the beginning of his career, although his views on the subject somewhat altered before his death. “Our city missions (he at one time said) are of great importance; but they are necessary, I conceive, ONLY BECAUSE THE CHURCHES ARE NOT DOING THEIR DUTY! THE SOONER THE CHURCHES ACT THE BETTER—WHAT A DIFFERENT EFFECT WOULD THEY PRODUCE.”

A fourth recommendation of what we propose is—it has to some extent been tried and found successful. It is not altogether novel and untried, being, with the exception of the co-operation on which it proceeds, substantially the parochial plan of Knox, and the territorial plan of Chalmers. Its success under the great Reformer and his coadjutors has been already noticed; its success under the vigorous guidance of the greatest man of this generation, has been truly encouraging. Inducted in 1819 into the parish of St John’s, Glasgow, for conducting his moral experiment free and unfettered, he divided his large parish into 25 districts, containing from 60 to 100 families. In each district he instituted one or more Sabbath schools, with a large complement of teachers; a few classes for the adult population were also opened, and by the aid of an assistant he had “three public services every Sabbath in St John’s

church, and one in a school-house situated in the east end of the parish, which commenced at the same time with the forenoon service in the church." Moreover, he erected four week-day schools; and his whole parish, with a population of 10,000 souls, a great proportion of whom were unconnected with any church, he assiduously visited. In one week alone, he overtook from 700 to 800 people. Such territorial operations, particularly in the educational department, proved eminently successful. In a short time, his schools, by the aggressive method, were filled, while many adult outcasts were brought not only to attend the house of God, but to give evidence of a saving change of heart.

During the few short years that this distinguished philanthropist laboured in St John's, he proved what could be done by the agency of an influential congregation acting territorially and aggressively. Twenty-three years afterwards, by another experiment of a different kind in the Westport, Edinburgh, whose success we have already mentioned, and which is well-known throughout Scotland, he proved what could be done by the agency of a poor congregation acting territorially and aggressively, or rather what could be done by the erection of an ecclesiastical apparatus, with a proper staff of office-bearers, in the midst of a destitute locality.

The example which he set in both these ways, has been successfully followed by others. Several successful imitations of the first method are not wanting. Many large town congregations are laudably engaged in home missionary enterprise. They have instituted both week-day and Sabbath schools, and have both paid and voluntary agents employed, compelling the wanderer and wayfarer to come in. With

respect to the other method, we can point to several tested experiments of the same kind, or nearly so. Identical in every respect with the Westport, is Holyrood Territorial Church, which, as we have seen stated, has been remarkably successful, bidding fair to realize the most sanguine anticipations of its projectors. Another example of the same sort, in its initiatory stage, is to be found in the Cowgate of Edinburgh. By the munificent liberality of the Countess of Effingham, a valuable mission has been supported for the last five years, in that necessitous part of our northern capital just mentioned, on Chalmers's territorial principle. The schools are well attended by the class for whom they are designed, and are efficiently taught, as was evinced by a late examination; while from 60 to 80 adults are brought every Sabbath evening to hear the Word explained and enforced, who would otherwise have been pursuing their guilty career.* Another example, which differs, however, in several respects, from those just noticed, is to be found in Aberdeen. The Christian philanthropists of that town lately turned a theatre into a chapel for the benefit of the outcast population, and appointed a suitable labourer, who testifies that "the result has been such as to make all interested in the effort to thank God and take courage." At first it was attended by about 20 persons, but now it is crowded with an attentive and interested audience. Yea, what is more, cases of conversion are not awanting: "some who, not long since, were regarded as almost irreclaimable, are giving evidence of newness of life."

There are other examples of a mixed kind—that is, of churches which, though not planted exclusively for

* *Witness.*

the spiritually destitute, have been erected in destitute localities, and have succeeded in gathering many outcasts within their walls. One of the foremost of this class, with which the writer is acquainted, is that of the Free South Church, Paisley, under the pastoral superintendence of the Rev. Alexander Pollock. During a brief but active incumbency, he has more than doubled his congregation—his average attendance being now 700—a very large proportion of whom have been excavated. At every communion, which is quarterly observed, there are several parties baptized before being admitted as communicants, which shows how they must have been previously living. The machinery by which he accomplishes these results, differs little, if any thing, from the ordinary territorial kind. His church being the only one in a poor district, containing about 7,000 souls, he assumes the whole of that as his parish, and concentrates upon it all his efforts, visiting those unconnected with his own or any other congregation as he finds opportunity. Connected with his church are four Sabbath schools, with an attendance of 800; two common week-day schools, and an industrial school. In addition, a lay-missionary is employed for reading the Scriptures to the spiritually destitute, and for using the most likely means of persuading them to desist from their evil ways, and to turn unto the Lord with their whole heart.

Such, with certain modifications hereafter to be mentioned when treating of schools, is a brief outline of our plan for towns and populous villages. The smaller the town or village, the more conveniently and efficiently can it be carried into effect. Though adapted especially for cities, it can be applied with little

modification to rural parts. Congregations acting upon it, either in town or country, that is, congregations associating themselves as missionary bodies, and dividing the place from which they are drawn into various districts, allocating them as has been shown, should severally have at least one annual meeting for prayer, in connection with their efforts, as also, for hearing from the minister and his fellow-helpers what has been done during the year. Serving to draw down the divine blessing on their undertaking, an annual congregational meeting for these purposes would also tend to interest and stimulate all the members in the heavenly work of excavation. Every one, moreover, personally engaged in the good work, would gather experience from hearing a detailed narrative of the operations of his fellow-labourers; while, from the collective experience of all the co-workers, new and improved plans of usefulness might be expected to emanate.

An annual meeting of all the co-operating congregations belonging to the same town might likewise be held, for united prayer, friendly conference, and mutual exhortation. Such an assemblage would increase their brotherly love, enlarge their acquaintance with home-missionary work, stimulate their zeal, and incite others to copy their example. Some would have cheering intelligence to communicate, which would warm the hearts of all interested in the mental and moral elevation of their neighbours, and addresses would also be delivered, and communications read, from other places where similar operations were going on, which, under God, could not fail to give a mighty impulse to home missions in that locality.

The plan just explained may by some be objected to,

on the ground of its catholicity, proceeding, as it does, on the co-operation of the different evangelical sects. In looking at this objection, it should be carefully remembered, that the co-operation recommended is of the most limited kind, consisting merely in a mutual understanding about fields of labour, and, as far as may be deemed expedient, in friendly conference and prayer. Now, to this extent, we believe all the denominations who hold the essential doctrines of Christianity, may co-operate without compromising their distinctive principles. Co-operation of this nature we regard not as lowering our testimony for Free Church principles, which being, as we maintain, clearly taught in the Bible, we are bound to uphold, defend, and propagate, be the cost what it may, and which we fervently hope will ere long gain the ascendancy in every land, but simply as a recognition of the Christianity of other sects, who may not meantime see eye to eye with us on these important points. Guarding, on the one hand, against latitudinarianism, Christians must, on the other hand, no less sedulously guard against sectarianism; holding fast what they consider as “the faith once delivered to the saints,” they must not forget to do so in charity towards those from whom they are constrained to differ. Moreover, it will help to obviate the objection under consideration, if the end for which united action is sought, be duly pondered. In our opinion, it would greatly assist home evangelization, as it would tend to enlist all in the good work, lead to more orderly, systematic efforts, and exhibit a Christian spirit before the world, which would not be without its own effect in recommending religion to our careless countrymen. This is our view of the matter,

which we state with unfeigned diffidence, as we know many entitled to the highest respect hold a different opinion, grounded on reasons we can fully understand and appreciate, although we think that, upon the whole, they are not to be compared with the good which might be expected to result from the co-operation recommended.

Wherever there exists insuperable barriers to this limited co-operation for which we contend, denominational or congregational efforts should be made forthwith. If in any town the adherents of some one section of the church are averse to co-operation, or resident among those who stand aloof from it, they may combine and form themselves into a local mission. Should they do so, then they might either proceed by assigning to each co-operating congregation a particular district, or by selecting a certain destitute locality as the sphere of their joint operations, concentrating their efforts thereupon until they had made provision for its regular supply of ordinances. Having accomplished this, then they could select another district, and deal with it likewise; and so on, as long as there was one district un-supplied with a fully equipped church. In the event of there being no united home-missionary movement in any town, either by the various evangelical churches without regard to sect, or by the different churches of the same sect, then individual congregations, as soon as convinced of the necessity of doing something for the neglected masses, should bestir themselves in their behalf, fixing on some particular spot as a circuit of action. One reason why many congregations do little or nothing for reclaiming their perishing neighbours, is the difficulty of ascertaining where, in the wide moral

wilderness, they should begin the work of spiritual cultivation. The vastness of the field drives them away from it altogether. Instead of thus acting, they should, in imitation of those who emigrate to the back settlements of America, select some limited territory, and concentrate upon it their whole available force. Having made their selection, then, as previously suggested, they could subdivide, institute week-day and Sabbath-day schools, and erect the whole ecclesiastical machinery which is fitted, with God's blessing, to make the moral desert rejoice and blossom as the rose.

At this stage, I would repeat, even at the risk of being deemed tedious and tautological, that too much importance cannot possibly be attached to the methodical division of towns into small sections, assigning one or more to each congregation, making, at the same time, some arrangement for the occupation of any surplus districts, or, failing this, the assumption by denominations or individual congregations of some definite field of labour; and, where there is unoccupied ground, by each body of qualified agents that may volunteer their services, of some particular sphere of missionary operation. One or other of these things, the first if at all possible, requires to be done to insure that vigilant supervision, and that concentration of effort, which are absolutely essential to success. It is not random, unmethodical attempts that will penetrate and renovate the dense masses of ungodliness that disfigure and endanger the land, but orderly, systematized essays. This, which commends itself to reason, is fully borne out by the experience, I believe, of all who have ever given home-missionary work a fair trial. It coincides at least with my own experience. For several years I la-

boured, as time permitted and occasion offered, among the spiritually destitute in Johnstone—now in one place, and now in another; but I can truly affirm, I have been more successful since of late I have confined my labours principally to one particular district contiguous to my own church.

The allocation or selection of districts, however important, is but the commencement of the undertaking. That being accomplished, then operations, as previously intimated, or as the labourers may determine, should be immediately commenced and vigorously carried forward. Much will depend on the manner in which each district is subdivided and wrought. The smaller the subdivisions, and the oftener they are visited, the better. More, however, will depend on the agents, both paid and unpaid, than upon any thing else. Those of them, whether clergymen or laymen, who devote themselves exclusively to the work of evangelization, must be men who sympathise with the poor, who can speak to them familiarly and kindly, who can address them on the great subject of religion in a plain, feeling, forcible manner, compelling them by their very gentleness and earnestness to listen to the glad tidings of salvation. Above all, they must be men full of faith and of the Holy Ghost; men whose ruling passion is to win souls to the Saviour, and who do every thing in a spirit of entire dependence on God, looking up to Him for that assistance through which alone any real good can be effected. And, to every other qualification, they must have a spirit of indomitable perseverance. Having put their hand to the plough, they must never look back; having begun, they must toil on unremittingly and untiringly, daunted by no danger, discouraged by no difficulty, discomfited by

no failure. With resolution, with patience, with courage, with a confiding spirit, with renewed strength, they must thread the dark lanes, and explore the still darker habitations of the outcast poor, speaking to them as friends, and urging them to flee to the hope set before them in the gospel; and thus, with the divine blessing, shall the murky dwellings of these unhappy beings be irradiated with the light of heaven, and turned into temples of the living God.

While those who labour among the spiritually destitute should, as far as possible, be such as have been described, it is of importance to observe, that home evangelization will greatly depend on what ministers in general are, especially in their public ministrations. Much of the prevailing spiritual destitution is traceable to the past laxity and feebleness of the ministry; and it will never be thoroughly overtaken till pastors, in the aggregate, be something like what they ought to be—men of evangelical views, of vigorous intellect, of persuasive eloquence, and of distinguished devotedness. This is an earnest thinking age; and therefore, to secure the continued attendance of those who already frequent the sanctuary, as well as to collect within its peaceful precincts those who have learned to turn their back upon it, gospel truth must be clearly stated, ably illustrated, and powerfully recommended. If those of our more intelligent artizans and factory-workers who are thoughtful and inquisitive, but strangers to regeneration, do not find the pulpit attractive by the talent therein displayed—if, in short, they discover that its literature lags behind that of the periodicals they greedily devour, it is improbable they will forsake the paper and the magazine for the dull, commonplace effusions of

the preacher. If, however, they find the great truths of our common salvation tersely stated and affectionately enforced—if they find themselves compelled by what is said to listen, and reflect, and inquire, then they may not only be induced to become regular frequenters of the church, but may also be won over to the Lord's side, and made to delight themselves in his statutes.

And home-evangelization will not a little depend on what the church as well as on what the ministry is. One great cause of the prevailing spiritual destitution is the worldliness, untruthfulness, deadness, in a word, the inconsistency of professors. The careless are repelled from Christianity and its advocates by the bad example of its avowed admirers and propagators, by the formalism and immorality of many who weekly repair to the house of the Lord, and who profess to be followers of the meek and lowly Jesus. There is need, then, of reformation in the pew as well as in the pulpit, in order to speed forward the Christianization of the kingdom. The world, in short, must be expelled from the church, before the church can go forth as a charmer and conqueror into the world—the exhortations of those who stand on the watch-towers of Zion must be enforced by those who crowd its sacred courts, ere religion can attract the attention and win the affection of those who are naturally prejudiced against its claims, ere it can influence godless men, who look with disdain on its repulsive imitation, but who have difficulty in resisting its attractive reality. O, that professors would bear this in mind; seeking, by the maintenance of a holy, consistent, and persuasive demeanour, to adorn their profession, and to make it tell on those

without, that souls may thereby be converted, the land evangelized, and the glory of God promoted!

The remedial measures prescribed take special cognizance of the godly upbringing of the young, by weekday schools, Sabbath schools, and otherwise. This important feature in these proposals having only as yet received a passing notice, we now proceed to unfold it somewhat more at large, as the thorough evangelization of the land greatly depends on the training our youth receives. Fully persuaded of the practicability of reclaiming a portion of the outcast adult population, and urging every one to make the trial, yet we must confess our hopes *are principally with the young*. Comparatively uncontaminated by the evil that is in the world, and uninitiated in the ways of sin, they are more easily instructed and impressed than those whose education has been neglected, and whose evil habits have become second nature. Hence the Christian philanthropist should apply himself with *double diligence* to their mental and moral culture. *Train up every child in the way he should go, and in a few years the evangelization of Britain will be complete.*

To be really beneficial, elementary education should be impregnated with religion. The heart as well as the head—the affections as well as the intellectual powers—should be carefully cultivated. If children be taught merely the common branches of secular knowledge, without being morally and religiously trained, their education will be comparatively worthless. I mean not to affirm that mere intellectual enlightenment is not preferable to brutish ignorance; but I do assert and maintain, that the culture of the intellect, apart from the

spiritual element, is exceedingly defective and undesirable. Many educationists, who willingly assent to this statement, hold nevertheless that the aid of ordinary teachers is unnecessary for helping to mould the hearts of those under their charge; contending that this should and can be done by the parents, who are responsible for their moral training; or that, failing them, it may be done through the agency of ministers and Sabbath-school teachers. We at once admit that parents are specially bound to seek the spiritual welfare of their offspring; but then it should be borne in mind, that the majority—pity it should be so—of those who stand in that relation, are intellectually and morally disqualified for bringing up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; and that many others, who are in some measure qualified for this duty, are so constantly occupied with engrossing toilsome avocations, as scarcely to have sufficient leisure to bring the higher influences of religion to bear upon their youthful charge. It may, however, be said, let pastors, and Sabbath-school teachers, and other philanthropists, attend to the spiritual culture of the whole of this large class of juveniles. Much, we admit, has been done, and can be done for them through the instrumentality of these agents; but, considering that their home-training is positively pernicious, or, at best, extremely defective, surely it is necessary to have the occasional lessons of professedly religious instructors, supplemented by the teachers of week-day schools. If the nation were decidedly pious, and all parents capable of bringing up their children for God, then the argument for the omission of Bible-training in schools would certainly be much stronger. But even though this were the case, it would not be wise to ex-

clude the Bible from our elementary seminaries, and to dispense with the aid of God-fearing teachers. To do so would be perilous. "The influence of a day-school is great—too great—to be lost to religious education. The school-hours are the most active hours of the day for improvement."

In considering this subject, it should never be forgotten, that the cultivation of the heart, not of the head, is the *main* part of education, and the most difficult to effect. However accurate and profound his scholarship, that youth's education has been sadly neglected, whose moral powers have not been, in the right sense of the term, educated. On the other hand, if he has been morally and religiously trained, his education is any thing but despicable, although his mental accomplishments be not of a high order. This, taken along with the fact, that the greatest difficulty is to train the child to habits of virtue, and to make him a child of God, any system of education must be radically defective that is calculated to benefit the scholar at the expense of the Christian. So difficult, indeed, is it to win the heart over to religion, that nothing should be left undone, either at home or at the school, to secure this desirable result.

Then, farther, it behoves us to reflect, that experience is decidedly against a non-religious, and in favour of a religious system of education. That experience is opposed to the former, we appeal to Prussia and America, in both of which countries it has led to infidelity, rationalism, communism, and indifferentism. One of the reports of the American Board says:—"The neglect of religious instruction in our schools, is doing more to nourish infidelity and immorality than ever was in the power of Voltaire or Paine." That experience is in

favour of a religious system, we appeal to Scotland, especially to the times immediately subsequent to the Reformation, when both churches and schools were in an efficient condition. The great benefits that then accrued to this section of the island, from the moral influence of parish schools, is matter of history. And though for a long time past these institutions have not, with some exceptions, been so powerful for good as formerly, this does not weaken the force of our appeal, as their impaired religious efficiency arises from the decay of spiritual fervour within their walls.

If there is any truth in what has been advanced, it follows that all elementary education should be based on religion. To secure the godly upbringing of the young, more especially those belonging to the sunken and sinking classes, where home-training must almost universally be on the side of evil, it is absolutely necessary that religion be taught in all primary schools, and taught, as far as possible, by men who are living under its purifying influences; yea, to secure this desirable result, it is necessary that every juvenile school should be conducted on a system identical with, or approaching to, what is popularly called the training-system, which, while paying due attention to the cultivation of man physically and intellectually, is admirably fitted to make him at once comprehend divine truth, and to feel its power. Those, therefore, desirous to promote home Christianization through the proper training of the young, should take care that their week-day education be saturated with religion, and well fitted, with God's help, to regenerate and save the soul. Unless due attention be paid to this, the evangelization of the country will not progress so satisfactorily as could be desired.

Now, in what way can this be best accomplished? We reply, either by each church having its school in connection with itself, or by a national non-sectarian system. The territorial plan advocated in this chapter, which is substantially that of Knox and Chalmers, proceeds on the close connection of church and school. Says the First Book of Discipline, “Of necessity it is that every several church have its school for the godly upbringing of the youth of this realm.” And the intimate union of church and school—the church superintending and controlling the school, and the school acting as the nursery of the church—has manifold advantages—is indeed the very *beau ideal* of perfection, if the entire community, as at the time of the Reformation, were united in their religious sentiments. As, however, there are so many rival sects, and so much denominational jealousy, and withal such a deplorable amount of educational destitution, a national unsectarian religious system, commensurate with the urgent necessities of the case, where care was bestowed on the licensing and training of teachers, and provision made for the inspection and superintendence of evangelical churches, might now be preferable. A system of this kind, to meet the views of all parties, it may be difficult to contrive; but I am far from thinking its contrivance impossible or its working impracticable, especially for Scotland, where, important as are some of our religious differences, yet we are generally at one about the Shorter Catechism and Confession of Faith. The great obstacle in the way arises from the advocates of the Voluntary principle, who refuse to accept of any aid from a government scheme that takes cognizance of religion. To satisfy the conscientious scruples of these

parties, the majority of whom are as keenly alive to the importance of early religious training as those who differ from them about the best mode of securing it, might it not do, for all the evangelical churches in Scotland at least, to meet and endeavour to frame a system of education for that section of the island, that would command the concurrence of all who believed in the supreme importance of religion. By an assembly of delegates from the different sects, nominated by their supreme courts, I am strongly persuaded that a system of education, based on Christianity, could be devised, which would give satisfaction to the religious portion of the community, and which the state, from the interest it is taking in the education of the people, might be disposed to patronize and endow. Did it provide, as it might easily do, for the harmonious inspection and superintendence of the different sects, and did the state forbear, as it might easily do, taking any direct cognizance of religion, seeing it would be in safe keeping, then, we submit, it might be endowed by those in authority without giving offence to the Voluntary party, on the footing of assistance to education. If the plan originated with the church, and was conducted under her associated harmonious control, merely receiving assistance from the state, without any state dictation, as far, at least, as religion was concerned, it would not, in our opinion, be inconsistent with the Voluntary principle to receive for such a plan government support. Such a system would exhibit a beautiful harmony between the church and the state in regard to the important subject of education, while it would provide for the *uniformity, and security, and spirituality* of the religious teaching, in a way superior to what these could

be provided for, either by state enactment and supervision, or by the laws and regulations of local educational boards. In short, such a system would, on the one hand, combine nearly all the advantages of a denominational territorial education, with all the advantages, on the other hand, of a comprehensive national education commensurate with the clamant necessities of the country.

Many contend out and out for denominational schools in preference to national, as instruments of evangelization, by alleging that, in addition to the erection of a well-appointed school in godless localities, aggressive influences must be used to fill it, and that these can be best put forth denominationally or congregationally. That aggressive efforts are necessary, to secure the attendance of neglected children to the best educational institute that can be planted among them, is undoubted; and that individual congregations, or a few associated congregations of the same persuasion, have advantages for putting them forth, is equally true; but could not congregations act aggressively for catholic as for sectarian ends? Could they not act congregationally for the common good, as for their separate congregational or denominational interests? Might not a few mixed congregations, in connection with one district school, furnish each their quota of suitable and zealous agents to go forth among outcast juveniles, endeavouring to compel their attendance? Is zeal and denominationalism indissolubly bound up together? Can a man be zealous merely as an Episcopalian, as a Presbyterian, as an Independent, and not zealous simply as a Christian? Perish the calumnious insinuation. That zeal which effervesces in the sect, but cools and evaporates out of it, if not, as I

am afraid, absolutely spurious, is at best mixed with considerable sediment.

If no satisfactory national scheme, securing the spiritual element, can be devised, then the state, which cannot be indifferent to the sound education of its subjects, should prosecute its present supplementary plan on a more liberal footing, giving larger grants to poor congregations and destitute localities, sparing no expense to have all properly educated who will accept of instruction at its hands. And although particular denominations may feel constrained to refuse its friendly aid, yet it commits *as great a blunder as a flagrant wrong* if it does not use means to have every poor outcast child both mentally and morally educated. Those youth who have no natural guardians to care for them, are peculiarly the wards of the state; and if it does not, at whatever cost, train them up in the way they should go, it must pay a heavy penalty. Here we would observe, that all the state has hitherto done to educate the children of the poorer classes is so fearfully inadequate, that we venture to affirm it must increase its educational allowances twentyfold before they accomplish the end desired. Of this the churches should not fail to remind it; remaining meanwhile not inactive, waiting for legislative aid, but, like the church of Knox and Melville, in Reformation times, proceeding with the erection of congregational schools, wherever practicable and necessary, at once anticipating and stimulating the government; yea, like some denominations, congregations, and individuals, planting schools in the heart of destitute districts, leaving nothing within the compass of their power undone to educate the whole country. And it is because we conceive this to be present duty, that,

in explaining the territorial plan in the first part of this chapter, we urged churches to provide, as far they can, for the sound education of the lambs of the flock, without at all alluding to national non-sectarian schools.

When we speak either of the state or the church providing education for the country, we do not mean that for the working classes generally it should be free or eleemosynary. Certainly not. What is necessary is to aid in the erection of suitable premises, to maintain normal schools for the proper training of teachers, and to provide them respectable salaries, so as to enable them to live comfortably without exacting exorbitant fees. This is all that is desirable. It is injurious to help any one more than is necessary. And a large experience has taught, that a small fee, in ordinary circumstances, tends rather to the prosperity of the school than otherwise. In connection with this, it is worthy of notice, that a remarkably successful experiment has lately been made of a self-supporting school, on the principle of graduated payments according to ability, by the Rev. R. Dawes, rector of King's Somberne, a small village in Hampshire. Some pay 10s. a-quarter, some 6s., others 2s., and others 1s., according to the station and supposed ability of the parents. By this contrivance, the school for some time adequately supported itself, although it had more than the usual staff of teachers, viz. two masters, two mistresses, and paid monitors. Now, however, it receives government aid, not from absolute necessity, but that the institution might be more respectably supported. If such things have been done in a Hampshire district, which the pains-taking rector states was any thing but promising—being thoroughly demoralized by the operation of the old poor-law—some-

thing similar may be accomplished in most parts of the kingdom. But to return: we remark that fees proportionate to the circumstances of the parents should ordinarily be exacted. And the great advantage of government aid is, that in poor localities a commodious school can be erected, and the termly payments adapted to the condition of the inhabitants. No doubt, many will be found every where, especially in large towns, who cannot afford to pay any thing for education, and whose inability is only equalled by their indifference regarding it; but these can be specially provided for, either through the common territorial schools, or by the erection of industrial and ragged schools.

The Free Tron congregation of Glasgow, as detailed in “The Schoolmaster in the Wynds,” have set a noble example of educating the children of the poorer classes, by the erection of territorial industrial schools—an example which is worthy of imitation. For the last sixteen years, they have maintained a large and flourishing school in the eastern part of the Tron parish, called Bridgegate School. Being deeply sensible, however, that all that was doing by themselves and others, was altogether inadequate to meet the educational wants of the district, they lately built a large school in the Old Wynd, with three commodious rooms, and secured the services of qualified teachers. In order to get the scholars—the greatest difficulty of all in such a neighbourhood—they formed an educational association, whose distinguishing features are “a body of visitors for using every practical means of securing the education of every child within the bounds, and an invitation to all the members of the congregation, who have the will and ability, to become the patrons of one or more

children, paying their school-fees, and at the same time taking a kindly and personal interest in their general welfare." The success of the association has equalled the great practical sagacity of its regulations. Before the aggressive system was begun, there were at Bridgegate and Wynd schools 199 scholars, and a year after its commencement there were 363; farther, 43 patrons have been secured, who have agreed to provide for the education and oversight of 111 children.

There are some in the wynds, however, whose case cannot be well met by ordinary territorial schools, as they require food and clothing as well as education: for these destitute children there have been originated ragged schools, which make provision both for the body and the mind. That these schools are admirably adapted for accomplishing the design of their institution, and that they ought to be liberally patronized, is proved by their remarkable success. Though of very recent origin—though, with the exception of John Pounds at the close of the last century, it is only nine years since Sheriff Watson of Aberdeen commenced them in that city on their present plan—though they are thus but of yesterday, yet wherever established and efficiently conducted, they have been eminently successful. Nine years ago, one was opened in Aberdeen by the patriotic Sheriff just mentioned, with 20 scholars, and now there are four in the same town, all well attended. Their success has been truly wonderful, and has surpassed the anticipations of the most sanguine. Says a writer in the May number of the *North British Review* of last year:—"The social revolution which Aberdeen has undergone through the agency of industrial schools, is now matter of history. A few years since, there were

280 children in the town, and 328 in the county of Aberdeen, who, compelled by their own parents to cater for their immediate wants, prowled about the streets and roved far and wide into the country—cheating and stealing their daily avocations. Now a begging child is seldom to be seen, and juvenile crime is comparatively unknown. The industrial schools have, by mild and gentle persuasion, gathered those neglected children under an humble but comfortable roof. The beggar boys and girls, ‘poor nurslings of the storm,’ who were found in the bleak dead of winter, with a few rags hanging loosely on their pale, emaciated, and haggard bodies, cowering for shelter in nooks and alleys, or begging their bread from door to door, are now enjoying all the comforts of a cheerful home, combined with the inestimable blessings of religious, moral, and industrial training.” Soon after the institution of ragged schools in Aberdeen, they were commenced in Edinburgh, and powerfully advocated in “The First and Second Plea,” which all interested in the reclamation of youthful outcasts must have perused with no ordinary feelings of pleasure. There are at this date several in operation in our Scottish metropolis, having an average attendance of 500; and as all know, from the “Pleas” and other sources of information, they are really doing incalculable good. Through their instrumentality many juvenile vagrants and thieves have been fitted for entering on some useful employment, and are with few exceptions behaving themselves orderly and properly. Nay, not only so, it is confidently believed by those who have the best opportunities of judging, that saving impressions have been made in these schools, and that some of their fruits are already being reaped in glory.

Ragged schools have also been established in London, and in many of the provincial towns throughout the kingdom. By the advocacy of the noble-hearted Ashley, and other philanthropists, they have been planted in several of the most destitute districts of the great metropolis. Within the precincts of that immense city, there were a year ago no fewer than 82 ragged schools attended by 9000 outcast children, many of whom have been taught industrial habits, and instructed in all the branches of a common elementary education ;—what is better, not a few of them have been brought to the foot of the cross, some of whom have been taken away to be for ever with the Lord, and others, spared in the merciful providence of God, are adorning the gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Nothing, indeed, should be left undone for imparting a sound secular education to every youth, even the most degraded, by territorial, industrial, and ragged schools. And the Bible instruction imparted in these week-day seminaries should be followed up and supplemented by the Sabbath school. Every church ought to have a Sabbath school for the religious instruction of the sons and daughters of its own members. This is its imperative duty, as the church is bound to instruct its own children. Said our Lord to Peter, “ Feed my lambs.” Parents, we know, are responsible for training up their children in the way they should go, but many parents are totally unqualified for thus training them, while others, who are not altogether destitute of the ability, are sadly neglectful of parental duty. Suppose, however, they were alike able and diligent, this would not free the church from its responsibility of

giving public instruction to the lambs of the flock, through the medium of the Sabbath school, or in some other way.

It is not, however, enough for the church to look on its own things—the things of others must be looked on and looked after, as well as what is strictly congregational. In accordance with this remark, efforts should be made by congregations, and failing them, by societies and individuals, for giving Sabbath-day instruction to all neglected children. Much we know is doing in this way, both congregationally and otherwise. Still, more Sabbath schools should be opened for the spiritual improvement of those youthful unfortunates who are growing up untaught to fear the Lord, and domiciliary visitation should be employed to have them filled, as well as means used to have trained teachers of piety set over them, so that they may be indeed and in truth nurseries for heaven. Let all who love the Lord Jesus Christ, and who love little children for his sake, reflect on this matter, and on their responsibility in connection with it, that if possible they may be stimulated to do something for those whose spiritual destitution cries aloud for help.

Thus have we briefly sketched what we regard as the principal remedial measures for effecting the moral and spiritual elevation of the land. But, it may be asked, are they practicable? Eminently so, is our rejoinder. May not our towns and villages be divided by mutual consent among the different churches, or may not each denomination, or each church, select a district for itself, and there concentrate its energies. O yes, some may say, it is practicable to this extent, but whence the funds for erecting the mental and moral machinery,

and whence the agency for working it efficiently? It is useless to conceal that the procurement of the means and the men, especially in poor localities, where evangelistic efforts are most needed, constitutes the great difficulty. Still, even these may be obtained. Government is disposed to aid in the erection and endowment of schools, which is encouraging. But, independently of its support, is it not possible for the better-disposed classes to raise the requisite funds? A fourth part of what they needlessly spend, and what, therefore, they could well spare, would shortly cover the whole land with all the schools, and churches too, that are necessary, besides doing something toward their endowment. And shall this, in such a time of need, be withheld? Shall it be said, that men professing godliness will not give a fourth of their needless expenditure for the best of all purposes, the intellectual and spiritual illumination of the sunken and sinking masses? Shall it be said, that our noblesse expend more on the decoration of their mansions, or on the entertainment of their friends, or on continental tours, than on the mental and moral elevation of their poor benighted countrymen, whose welfare they are bound, by every high and holy consideration, to promote? Shall it be said, that our operatives, who make a profession of religion, give more for luxuries, many of them hurtful, than for the education of their own families, and that of others who have lapsed into a state of abject poverty and normal indifference? Shall these things continue, as hitherto, to be truly affirmed? Surely not.

And agents, as well as money, may be found. As to ministers, the principal agents, there is a superabundant supply for the whole country, if they were all

really in earnest and rightly distributed. In England, there are upwards of 18,000, or fully more than one for every 1,000 souls, and in Scotland there are nearly 3,000, or one for about every 1,000 inhabitants. Numerically, then, the supply is equal to the demand; but the pity is, that there are many in both sections of the island, particularly the southern, who are little fitted for usefulness, while, owing to our sectarianism, and the irregular plantation of charges, mainly traceable to our unequal and capricious parochial divisions, there are in some parts a great surplus, and in other parts a great deficiency of clergymen. There are various signs, however, which induce us to hope, that devoted watchmen, not a few, will soon be raised up to succeed those now slumbering on the watchtowers of Zion; and signs, also, are not awanting, which lead us to regard the day as dawning when the church shall be more united, and when its ministers shall be more advantageously located for promoting its general good than they are at present. In addition to more qualified ministers and their better disposal, more lay-agents are also needed. And may not these be obtained? A tenth-part of all on the communion-roll would suffice for Sabbath school teachers and visitors. And surely a congregation must be spiritually low, if a tenth of its members are not able and willing personally to assist in home missionary efforts. How the number of lay-agents already employed may be increased, we shall have occasion to show in a subsequent chapter. Meantime, we ask, is it too much to expect that 1 in 10, or 10 per cent. of all our *bona fide* membership, may not be prevailed on to take an active interest in evangelistic work? In a congregation, say of 300 communicants, may not 30 working home mission-

aries be obtained ? We reply, Very easily, if there is any life at all in the congregation.

What has been said may serve to show that the measures recommended are any thing but Utopian. And, when they are as necessary as practicable and sound, ought not a general movement to be made to carry either them or similar measures into immediate effect ? Delay should specially be avoided. They cannot, we admit, be put into operation without laborious exertion. But nothing valuable can be otherwise achieved ; and surely he little deserves the name of a Christian philanthropist, who will not strenuously exert himself to elevate his country socially and morally. Effort, laborious effort, is needed ; but there are good reasons for believing that, with God's blessing, it would be ultimately crowned with success. Shall it, then, be awanting ? Much as the churches are doing at present, they have scarcely begun to put forth their whole strength ;—THEY ARE ONLY YET AT THE STAGE OF EXPERIMENTING. Gloomy, indescribably gloomy, would be the national prospects, did we feel we had done all that we could. This, however, is very far from being the case. And it is to this mainly that abounding ungodliness is to be traced, so that the words of the greatest orator of ancient times, in haranguing his fellow-citizens to repel the aggressions of the king of Macedon, are truly applicable to us :— “Remember,” he said, “that Philip has conquered, not your city, but only your indolence and neglect.” Yes, it is but supineness and neglect of duty that has brought the nation into its present lamentable state. Let us, then, arise and shake ourselves from our sloth, and arm ourselves for the conflict, remembering that nothing is impossible to those whom the Lord assists.

Let each seek to outrival his neighbour in carrying forward the great work of the day, the evangelization of the out-field masses—let our holy rivalry be, who shall be most laborious and most successful in advancing the cause of Him who loved us, and gave himself for us. In commencing one of his most celebrated engagements, the immortal Nelson proclaimed :—“England expects every man this day to do his duty.” And in the battle now being waged in this land between Christianity and Heathenism, a battle of most momentous issue, the great Captain of our salvation proclaims, that he expects every one of his soldiers to be at his post, and to do his duty ; and to this proclamation a practical response should be given, as there never was more need of every leal-hearted Christian warrior doing his utmost to beat back the foe, and to plant the standard of the cross in every stronghold of the enemy.

CHAPTER IV.

SUBSIDIARY REMEDIAL MEASURES.

“ Go through, go through the gates ; prepare ye the way of the people ; cast up, cast up the highway ; gather out the stones ; lift up a standard for the people.”—ISAIAH lxii. 10.

THE remedial measures which have been stated and illustrated in the preceding chapter, we regard as the *principal* measures that should be employed in the evangelization of our country. Apart from them—apart from the ministration of a pure gospel, and the careful training of the young—all other remedies will fail to reach the seat of our social maladies, and to diffuse the glow of health through a disordered nation. Fully persuaded of this, and giving it that prominence to which it is justly entitled, there are yet other important measures, of a subsidiary kind, which should be simultaneously and vigorously applied—measures which will economize the available force of the Church, remove stumbling-blocks, and prepare the way for the thorough, permanent Christianization of the realm. Several of these, as will be seen, are special or extraordinary—being demanded by the present state of society, and, therefore, intended to be only temporary and introductory. Others of them, again, as will be found, are preventive and counteractive, and such as should be continued with the highest state of Christianity.

I. Out-door preaching should be largely practised during the summer months, by those ministers having the requisite strength and gifts.—This method of proclaiming salvation was frequently employed by the Great Teacher himself, during his personal ministry, when he tabernacled on earth. Seated on a convenient hillock, or in a small fishing boat, did he often address the assembled multitudes; and his example, so worthy of imitation, has been copied by many of the most devoted spiritual labourers in every age, to the no small advantage of mankind. Open-air preaching has been remarkably countenanced by the Great Head of the church—it has been blessed to the quickening and ingathering of many dead souls; and it is a remarkable fact, worthy of special notice, that it has been more or less resorted to during those seasons of revival, when the Spirit was copiously effused, and multitudes added to the church, such as should be saved. Ought not, then, the ministers of this generation to go to the lanes and alleys, lifting up their voices like a trumpet, and inviting all to believe, repent, and live? Those of us whom God has honoured by putting into the ministry, cannot but feel ourselves shut up to prosecute this work, as there are so many in our towns and villages who are perishing for lack of knowledge, and who can in no way be reached so immediately and conveniently as by out-door ministrations.

All who have made the experiment unite in declaring, that for the most part they have got large and attentive audiences, and have met with much encouragement. In the last sermon which the Rev. Rowland Hill preached, a few days before he died, he referred with satisfaction to his itinerant labours. He said—“I almost wish to be

made young again, if I could but again see such days as when I first preached at Tottenham Court Chapel, and was in the habit of preaching in the streets and lanes, for want of room. Oh! how I long to recollect what I felt." On a previous occasion, when, referring to his street preaching, that venerable man said, "That, as far as he had ascertained, more souls were converted under these sermons, than under any others he had preached."*

The late Rev. John M'Donald, of Calcutta, as we learn from his interesting life, preached out of doors when he laboured in the metropolis, and had good reason to believe that his labours in that way were not in vain. In a letter to the Hon. and Rev. Baptist Noel, written in 1835, he states that he often preached in the streets of London, to congregations of from 100 to 500 persons, and that he met with considerable success. "As to the general demeanour of such congregations," he said, "so far as my experience extends, it has been of the most satisfactory kind. I have not personally met with any interruption worth calling such. I have met with uniform attention, and have often witnessed a most striking change of expression, and sometimes deep emotion, in persons who were hearers, not by design, but by accident. The fluctuation of hearers I have not found to be great; true, there are passers-by, who stand, perhaps, only for a minute, and then proceed on their way; but, of those persons who have remained for a few minutes, I have found that a very small proportion depart in general before the conclusion of the service. I should say that 50 out of

* "Memoir of Rowland Hill, by Mr William Jones," pp. 167, 168, 234.

500 is an over statement of the number of such persons.”*

During last summer, several ministers, and lively Christians of various denominations, belonging to Hull, formed an association for preaching in the open air. They had religious service in some well-frequented part of the town almost every evening, and sometimes several services in different parts during the same night. Around the officiating minister stood a band of young men, who led the psalmody, and distributed tracts to the crowds on their dispersion. These services, as far as attendance was concerned, were eminently successful, and not the slightest annoyance or interruption was experienced. In Paisley, also, weather permitting, sermons, for some time past, have been preached in a large open space near the railway station, which have been well attended. On our officiating there one evening, in the autumn of last year, not fewer than 800 souls could have been present, a considerable proportion of whom, we should say about 200, were evidently not in the habit of attending public worship. I may farther state, that, for the last five years, I have been in the habit of preaching in the open air, during summer, in the villages adjacent to Johnstone, and have seldom had to complain either of a thin or an inattentive audience. From all my experience of this mode of bringing the gospel to bear on the masses, I believe that, as a temporary expedient, it is calculated to be useful, and that it should be more extensively practised and patronized than it has ever yet been.

Some, we are aware, regard field-preaching as scarcely clerical—as scarcely consistent with ministerial dignity

* “Life of the Rev. J. M'Donald, by the Rev. W. K. Tweedie,” 2d Edition, p. 298.

and decorum. Nothing can be more erroneous, and more indicative of coldness, than the holding of this opinion. We should like to know, what evidences of deep-toned piety, and of missionary zeal, are furnished by men of such notions. Inconsistent with his dignity for the servant to imitate his Master, and to follow in the wake of Knox, and Whitefield, and M'Donald, and other honoured ambassadors ! Inconsistent with his dignity for the labourer in the vineyard to break up, by the most toilsome method, every inch of fallow-ground ! Inconsistent with his dignity for the shepherd to follow the stray sheep over hill and dale, and through wood and marsh, that he may bring it back rejoicing ! Strange inconsistency this, with ministerial propriety ! The only things incongruous with the demeanour of an ambassador for Christ, are sin, and sloth, and unfaithfulness. And, if so, those ministers degrade their sacred office, and lower their dignity—not who preach as occasion offers, at the corner of every street—but those who, preferring their ease to their work, pass and repass through the crowded thoroughfares, without ever solemnly warning the neglected multitudes of their danger, and earnestly entreating them to flee from the wrath to come.

II. The church should economize and suitably arrange her available agency.—The scarcity of ministers for the spiritually destitute is the great lamentation ; and certainly it cannot be sufficiently deplored, as many additional labourers are required to overtake the vast breadth of home destitution. Undeniable as this is, it is equally undeniable that there is a great waste of existing agency, and that, with judicious arrangement, more effective service could be done by those who are now prophesying

upon the dry bones. As there are in some parts more labourers than are absolutely needed, should not efforts be made, when labourers are so much in request for populous places, to get every supernumerary drafted into the towns where so many are manifestly living without God, and speeding their way to irremediable ruin? But apart from any such removals, which it would not be easy amicably to effect, there are several ways of arranging existing agents so as to derive more advantage to home missions from their labours. One, for example, is the regular or casual exchange of pulpits. What with the careful preparation for the services of the sanctuary, and the many official duties which claim attention, ordinary ministers, however desirous to look beyond their own congregations, have but little time for doing so. But, by friendly exchanges, either stated or occasional, they would have leisure to extend their labours to the neglected population. Those of the same communion residing in close proximity, might alternate with one another, at one of the diets of worship every Sabbath, if not for the whole year, at least for a large portion of it, which would enable them to devote a part of their time to home missionary work. Or again, interchanges might be made for a month or two annually, among ministers of the same denomination who lived at a distance from one another, by means of which they would be at liberty to devote themselves to *excavation* during the week. Plausible objections may be urged against these plans. Some may contend that it would be injurious to congregations, as it is difficult always to effect an exchange equally acceptable to all concerned. In this there is considerable force, but if the exchange was judiciously made, with the consent, it might be, of the

congregations themselves, then instead of being hurtful, it would be highly beneficial to their spiritual prosperity, as, for a season, they would enjoy the refreshing exhortations of another pastor, earnestly intent on their salvation. Besides, if congregations agree to some such plan as we are proposing, solely with a view to the re-clamation of the spiritually destitute, they might expect a *special blessing* to accompany the message by whomsoever delivered.

Before leaving this topic, I cannot forbear observing, that among many intelligent and devout assemblies, there is a large measure of what may be appropriately called spiritual selfishness. Ardently attached to their own minister, and greatly benefited by his ministry, they begrudge his absence from among them for the most limited period, however usefully he may be employed elsewhere—however valuable may be his services in another corner of the vineyard. Is this altogether proper? Should they not be willing to share, in some small measure, their advantages with others? and, more especially, should they not be willing to see another occasionally occupying their revered instructor's place in the pulpit, that he may personally go out to the highways and hedges and compel men to come in? However attached to their own pastor, and however edified by his discourses, ought they not rather to encourage than to retard his evangelistic efforts, even at the expense of a little self-denial to themselves?

Farther, might it not be advantageous to home missions, and to the general interests of religion in the land, to assign to certain ministers, specially gifted, particular departments of duty—some of them of a novel and peculiar kind—demanded both by the state of the

country and the requirements of the age? There are diversities of gifts given by the Spirit to profit withal—gifts which should be turned to the best account, by giving to each man work suited to his own special gift, more particularly when the times in which we live imperatively demand that every talent should be judiciously employed.

Some ministers, for example, may be eminently fitted for arresting the attention and reaching the hearts of the common people, and for establishing churches in destitute localities. Would it not be serviceable to the cause of home evangelization, if a few of these—in imitation of the great apostle of the Gentiles, who regarded himself as particularly called to plant churches, and who scrupulously avoided building on another man's foundation—would consent to be loosed from their charges, and to become evangelists at large, itinerating far and near during the summer, and localizing, it might be, their exertions during winter? Some such arrangement, from all we know of out-door preaching, and of the kind of addresses fitted to rivet the attention of the outfield population, could not fail to be attended with beneficial results.

Again, some ministers may be profoundly acquainted with prevailing errors, and admirably fitted for exposing them, and for defending the citadel of truth. Would it not be desirable, that a few of these should be specially set apart as *controversialists*, for refuting, through the pulpit, in a masterly, but withal popular manner, current forms of unbelief and corruptions of doctrine? Considering the prevalence of scepticism and heterodoxy, would it not be desirable to provide for their exposure and overthrow, in such a way as would tend to benefit the educated classes, without, at the same time,

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being unintelligible to the comparatively uneducated. And is not this likely to be best accomplished by some such expedient as that which we are recommending? Something of the same kind was lately advocated in one of our first-class Reviews. "The pulpit," says the reviewer, "needs to be flanked in our time by new agencies. The press is too many for it, as narrowed to its present topics, and its present mode of presenting them. It meets a certain breadth of modern society, taking in a considerable number of its middle and humbler classes with tolerable effect; but a wide stream of imperishable natures is ever passing right and left of it, wholly untouched by it, and not at all likely to be touched by it. We have long thought that it is deeply to be regretted there is not, at least, one pulpit in every town occupied by a man who would be a preacher to the age—a preacher, we mean, who would bring the force of a sanctified intellect and heart to the work of rescuing human spirits from those more philosophical and ever-shifting forms of error which are ensnaring multitudes among the more influential portions of the community to destruction. It would be a happy thing, we think, if a few men of this sort would consent to be accounted as without any special charge or home, and be ready to move from place to place, at moderate intervals, say every six or twelve months—men of the same class, and devoted to the same objects, interchanging pulpits in this manner, with a view to mutual relief, and the better action against the errors of the times. A band of this sort, little concerned about sectarian differences, but earnestly devoted to the work of grappling with the errors of the reading and more educated classes of the age, might do a service to the great Christian

interest, the magnitude of which would not only be great, but be conspicuous for ages to come.”*

In such and similar ways as those now specified, we think the church might economize and arrange her agency, so as really to do much more work, and to tell with more effect on the infidel and ungodly classes. Hitherto she has been too much cramped by usage and system, and too little alive to the necessity of extraordinary expedients to meet the wants of the times. If as little skill and management had been employed in marshalling our armies at those celebrated battles that have secured our national independence, and taught every government to respect our name, as have been displayed by the various sects in arranging their forces to meet and conquer the enemies of righteousness, who have now assumed an aspect so terrific and threatening, our nation, we much fear, would not have held the proud pre-eminence she has attained. It is a hopeful symptom, that various denominations seem disposed to break loose from their old routine, and to assign to fitting agents particular departments of duty, which are loudly called for at the present moment. And let us hope, that those who have the ability, will provide the means of supplying such special agencies as may be deemed necessary to be set in operation. How it would still farther ennable those who are always devising liberal things, to come forward and subscribe for the support of *a few evangelists and controversial lecturers!* Honour be to the men who shall set the example of thus helping forward those noble movements which require to be made for stemming the fountains of error, and for bringing within reach of all, even the most degraded,

* “British Quarterly,” August 1848.

those crystal streams which refresh and gladden the weary, sin-laden soul !

III. *To the wide dissemination of those religious publications that are daily teeming from the press, additional books and tracts pervaded by a Christian spirit, but withal more interesting, and more adapted than those in general circulation to secure the attention of the labouring classes, should be forthwith published and extensively circulated.*—The almost countless numbers who neglect the public ordinances of religion may be instructed through the medium of books, as well as by domiciliary visitation. By means of these unobtrusive messengers, the Christian agent may prolong his address to the careless household, after bidding them adieu. And much good has been done and may be done by supplying the spiritually destitute with productions of a religious character. None can tell the benefits that have accrued from book and tract distribution. Tens of thousands have received their first serious impressions from the perusal of an unpretending volume, yea, of a little tract of two pages. Some, we know, rather undervalue tracts on account of their physical insignificance; but why should they, since the gospel can be compressed into small compass—since it is a principle of the divine procedure to accomplish great things by insignificant means—and since tract distribution has been abundantly blessed to the conversion of many souls? We are indeed hearing every day of the good achieved by these little messengers of mercy, as well as by publications of greater pretensions. It is only a few months ago since one of the agents of that admirable institution, the Religious Tract Society, stated, “ that venders of spurious literature

have been arrested in their wicked course, and whole districts of London, of the very worst description, reclaimed by the circulation of religious tracts and books, and the establishment of libraries."

While religious publications of all sorts and sizes have done, and are calculated to do, great good, they should at present be widely disseminated among the operative classes, who are exposed to the demoralizing influences of a flood of debasing literature. Through the issues of a cheap press, the labouring population are actually deluged with infidel and polluting productions which are filling their heads with error, corrupting them to the core, and working their temporal and eternal ruin. Now, in what way is this great evil to be met? The press evidently must be turned against itself—the corrupting influences of an evil press must be counteracted by the purifying and elevating influences of a good press, wrought with all possible energy and efficiency—the firebrands which are daily being manufactured in countless printing offices, and scattered every where among a thoughtless, sin-enslaved people, inflaming their passions, consuming the last shreds of their virtue, and preparing them for quenchless flames, must be extinguished and destroyed by manifold streams sent forth from the fountain of truth, through that mighty engine, which may be as powerful for good as for evil. In a word, to neutralize the mischief now being effected by an infidel polluting press, a religious press manned with the most suitable talent the country can supply, and supported with an enlightened liberality, must be made to send forth and to scatter through the land, thick as falling snowflakes in a winter day, religious books and tracts and periodicals. In this way

alone, as auxiliary to other means, can the mighty flood of pernicious literature, which is threatening to engulf society itself, and to turn Britain into a second France, be resisted and driven back, so that, with God's help, we may withal escape.

In order, however, to raise the religious press to a high state of efficiency, its issues should not only be characterized by ability and plentifully distributed, but should likewise be specially adapted to the sons of toil. By special adaptation to the whole of this class, we mean that as to style and manner they should be such as to arrest their attention, and to act as antidotes to their errors, cavils, and sins. They should present truth in a simple, captivating, telling form, so as both to obtain a perusal from our more thoughtful artisans and factory workers, and likewise to take their understanding by storm. Many books, otherwise excellent, are deficient in the combination of this double suitability. Some of them, from the attractions of style and narrative, have considerable interest, but they lack judgment and solidity, while others of massive matter are dry and uninteresting, and therefore seldom attentively perused—as addressed to the million, they want aptitude of purpose, and fail in accomplishing their design. The Rev. J. Hamilton of London, one of the most popular of tract writers, bears testimony to this effect. "Seldom," he remarks, "have I found a religious book suited to the labourer as he is. We have good books in abundance, but they are usually written with an eye to the parlour or boudoir. And we have myriads of tracts, but their topics and their style are mostly a tradition from Hannah More, and do not meet our modern exigency. 'Sorrowful Sam' and 'Diligent Dick' are gone the way

of all living, and a new generation has started up—a generation shrewd, active, and knowing—a generation of vigorous minds, fond of information, and bent on improvement.”*

Besides the suitableness of matter and style, it is highly desirable there should be an adaptation in a few of our religious publications to prevailing forms of unbelief and wickedness. As is well known, infidelity exists among the working classes under the various forms or phases of Owenism, Socialism, Pantheism, Rationalism, and so forth. Now, plain, pithy refutations of all these phases of infidelity, with their numerous subterfuges, could scarcely fail to be highly beneficial; they would be specific remedies for special forms of moral insanity that have seized upon multitudes of our people, deranging their ideas, and dragging them through the lowest depths of pollution, and might therefore be expected to act as counteractives, and to restore the poor bewildered patients to their sober senses. What might be anticipated has happened once and again. “In distributing tracts to-day,” said a town missionary lately, in Manchester, “a woman gave me the following account of her son:—He attended the Socialists for some time, and ultimately became a member of that society. So much was he interested in reading their pernicious tracts, that he would sit up through the night to do it, and would not think of reading any thing else. But the Lord has been pleased to open his eyes, and turn him from darkness to light, and this was principally through reading the tracts, ‘Edward, or almost an Owenite,’ and ‘Jared, or quite an Owenite.’ He is now a Sunday-school teacher, upholding that which

* Preface to the “Happy Home.”

he endeavoured to pull down." This is a sample of what might be accomplished on a large scale, were a series of books and tracts, suited to the principal prevailing phases of infidelity, published and widely circulated.

Farther, serieses should be printed bearing upon particular sins, and likewise on those excuses pled by many in justification of their irreligion. Of the former kind, several excellent issues upon intemperance, Sabbath profanation, and licentiousness, have lately appeared, and have been signally blessed. The tracts on the last-mentioned sin to which I refer, are by the Religious Tract Society, and good as they are, we exceedingly desiderate another series perhaps somewhat more systematic, to aid in arresting this fearful evil, which is ruining its tens of thousands, and which it requires great wisdom to handle with effect in the pulpit. Again, concise, pithy exposures of the various shallow pleas put forth by many who say they believe the Bible, and yet afford no evidence whatever—not even that of attendance on public worship—of being influenced by its saving truths, would be of very great service. In short, whatever principles and opinions keep men under the thrall of Satan, should be met and exposed by an issue of antagonist publications.

Before concluding this subject, we would exhort our readers to aid in the diffusion of edifying productions. All of you can lend efficient help in this way by encouraging the formation of congregational and Sabbath-school libraries and tract-distribution societies, by purchasing books and tracts either for presenting or lending to your careless neighbours, by becoming tract distributors for tract societies or private individuals, and by other methods which will readily suggest themselves to

your own minds. You can scarcely spend your time and money better than in forwarding the cause of truth through the diffusion of publications which grapple with prevailing error, and press salvation upon the attention of thoughtless multitudes. Set yourselves, then, without delay, heart and soul to this good work, so that you may assist in breaking down the strongholds of Satan, and in liberating your enslaved fellow-subjects from a bondage a thousandfold more galling and degrading than that under which the Israelites groaned when they were compelled to make bricks without straw, under the iron rod of merciless oppressors.

IV. Masters, especially the proprietors and managers of public works, should strenuously exert themselves to promote the moral and spiritual improvement of their servants.—Employers, notwithstanding of what may be said to the contrary, do not discharge their whole duty to the employed by simply giving them civil treatment and punctual payment of just wages. No: they are bound, in addition, to use what influence they possess for furthering their spiritual and eternal wellbeing. While all masters, without exception, should attend to the religious improvement of those in their service, there is a special obligation resting on manufacturers and others, who employ many hands, to pay attention to their moral culture. They are instrumental in crowding together vast numbers of both sexes and of every age and character, and thus of placing them in circumstances where corruption will make way, except salutary means be used to check its progress. Unless, then, those at the head of manufacturing and mercantile establishments study the moral amelioration of their operatives, they

cannot escape the charge of leading them into temptation without taking steps for enabling them to resist its insidious assaults. Moreover, it may be supposed that in every public work there are a few young people who have been religiously trained, and these the proprietors and overseers are as much bound to endeavour to keep from moral injury, as to have their factories in such order as that their workers, with due care, shall be kept from physical injury—and this they can do only by the use of such means as are calculated to promote the purity and to raise the character of all connected with their establishments. These statements must commend themselves to every one acquainted with the rudiments of moral obligation. It is one thing, however, to feel responsibility, and quite another thing to act accordingly ; and hence many who believe they should do something for those under their authority, yet do little or nothing. These are far more criminal than others who hold that all they have to do with their servants is to pay them. -

Without waiting to specify in what way householders should seek to benefit their domestics, let us proceed at once to inquire what the proprietors and managers of public works may do for promoting the moral and spiritual elevation of their workmen. What can masters of this description do for the good of those in their employment ? Very much, in many different ways. A good example is one way. A master is continually in the eye of his servants, and if his life is consistent, it will always be telling beneficially upon them ; if his conduct bear the stamp of genuine Christianity, he will morally benefit his people by merely walking through his works. Again, employers will promote the spiritual wellbeing of their

juvenile workers by interesting themselves in their education, by taking care that they are well educated either in schools erected for their special use, or in some efficient neighbouring seminaries. Moreover, proprietors of works might contrive plans for imparting religious instruction on the premises to those neglectful of divine ordinances; or, better still, they might try to persuade them to frequent some particular place of worship. They might, for example, as has been done by several manufacturers in this country, collect the people once a-week, for hearing a discourse from some qualified agent;—or, as is done by many American cotton-spinners, they might themselves, or through a minister, give them an address every Saturday as they quitted work—reminding them of their Sabbath duties, and pressing Christ on their acceptance;—or, if need be, as some proprietors have done in certain villages, they might erect a church for the special benefit of their operatives—using all legitimate means to secure their attendance;—or, they might employ a missionary to instruct them in their dwellings—to superintend the religious education of their children—and to ply them with every moral persuasive. Still farther, besides exercising great caution and circumspection in the admission of workers, they might make it known that they attached great value to character; that those who were guilty of immoral behaviour would be dismissed from their employment—and that none could be promoted to any situation of trust, who, in addition to requisite qualifications, did not exhibit a Christian demeanour. In a word, those who preside over factories and workshops, should, like the Christian head of a family, make the whole internal arrangements bear the stamp of re-

ligion; so that all within the premises may sensibly feel themselves under the operation of those influences which purify, and exalt, and bless the man.

To increase their moral weight, employers should manifest a tender concern for the temporal welfare of the employed; they should endeavour to secure for them commodious and comfortable dwellings, and should use the most likely expedients for teaching them cleanliness, frugality, and forethought. They should also treat them with uniform respect and kindness, showing by their looks, as well as by their words and actions, that they regard them as fellow-creatures, in whose temporal and eternal happiness they are deeply interested. By thus acting, masters might gain an ascendency over all their servants, which they could turn to the best account. Indeed, it is wonderful what good they might be honoured to achieve among their subordinates, if they only, in a Christian spirit, set about its accomplishment. But the difficulty is, to prevail on them to make a beginning; the old routine is too generally allowed to proceed undisturbed. There are, however, some Christian masters, both in this country and in America (and the number, we believe, is increasing), who make the Christianity of their workmen a matter of anxious concern, and earnest prayer, and who are endeavouring to elevate, morally and spiritually, those who have entered their employment—masters who are striving to conduct their temporal concerns like men that know and feel the importance of religion, and that are persuaded that all things should be done with an eye to God's glory. Would that this small number were increased a thousandfold, so that all our crowded factories and workshops, under the superintendence of God-fearing men, might be filled—

not as, alas! most of them are, with many utterly regardless and unprincipled, who make it their business to contaminate their better disposed associates—but with intelligent, religious workmen, who would be patterns of piety and usefulness, serving God in their day and generation.

We delight to gaze on the towering manufactory, with its ingenious multifarious machinery in prime working order, performing, as if by magic, its wonderful operations, under the guidance of well-trained hands; and we no less delight to feast our eyes on its external conveniences and decorations—on the neat gardenplots with which it is often surrounded, improving the taste of its pent-up throng, and refreshing them with the sweet-scented perfume of the rose and the honeysuckle. But, oh! it mars the joy of every such spectacle, if, as too often happens, there are good reasons for believing that more attention is paid to the polish of the furnishings, and the decoration of the grounds, than to the mental and moral culture of the moving mass therewith connected, many of whom are ignorant of the way of salvation, and rapidly passing onward, if mercy prevent not, to the regions of undying wo.

V. All likely means should be used to rescue the labouring classes from pinching poverty, and to promote their temporal comfort and respectability.—The physical and moral state of man are intimately connected—they constantly act and re-act upon one another. If, then, men are low physically, they will generally be found to be low morally; if they are poorly fed, meanly clad, and uncomfortably lodged, they are in those very circumstances that are promotive of spiritual degradation. It is therefore evident, that the impoverished state of a

large proportion of the industrious classes must be unfavourable to their moral and spiritual condition. Not only, then, by the promptings of humanity, but by feelings higher and nobler, should we be impelled to seek their temporal wellbeing, that they may be more advantageously situated for the cultivation of piety.

But, what means, apart from those that are moral and religious, can be used for bettering their worldly circumstances? To answer this, it is necessary to go back a single step, and to inquire into the origin of their social discomfort. How does it happen that many are reduced to a state of mendicity, and that others, not a few, can with difficulty obtain the barest necessaries, and are compelled to lodge in houses unfit for the abode of man? This arises partly from partial legislation, and from irregular, and often ill-paid, employment, the result of competition, and the fluctuations of trade; and partly from their own idleness, improvidence, and intemperance. Over the first class of causes they have comparatively little control; but, by the assistance of others, they may obtain, at least, their mitigation. Such, then, as may be desirous of benefiting the working classes, should devise, or at least support, when devised by patriotic legislators, every useful reform; striving, as enjoined by Scripture, "to break every yoke;" and should exert themselves to provide employment for the unemployed, and to secure justice between man and man.

The true friends of the sons of toil should, likewise, be contriving and countenancing philanthropic schemes, akin to those which have lately been originated, for finding paupers a residence and employment, through the reclamation and colonization of the waste lands of the kingdom, and for supplying our operatives with

cheap, commodious dwellings. The last mentioned scheme is one of the highest importance, as the physical and moral injury which the poor sustain from unhealthy, uncomfortable houses is past reckoning. Till steps be taken to provide them with better homes, their evangelization will be sadly obstructed. It is necessary that, along with the application of moral means, our agricultural, manufacturing, and mining population be provided with houses very different from what many of them now possess. Building associations, for this purpose, have been formed in some places, which should be encouraged and multiplied. Parliament, also, might be memorialized, to make such improvements in the Building Act as might prevent the erection of uncomfortable houses for the labouring population. Lord Ashley, so well worthy of a hearing on this subject, lately said—“We must obtain from Parliament a very considerable alteration and improvement of the Building Act, which regulates the whole system of building. I maintain this, upon the principle that cannot be gainsayed—it is a valid principle, although I know it has sometimes given offence; but I do maintain that property has its duties as well as its rights. In any new Building Act, we must have a provision that no man be allowed to lay out his money in such a way as shall tend to the injury of his fellow-creatures;—no man should be allowed to build a house, intended for the accommodation of working people, unless it contained every requisite for decency, health, and comfort.”

But while the friends of the people endeavour, in such ways as those now specified, to promote their temporal comfort, they must never cease telling them, that neither legislators nor philanthropists can do HALF so

much for them as they can do for themselves. Beyond all dispute, their poverty and wretchedness mainly proceed from their own inactivity, improvidence, and intemperance. “Drowsiness,” says Solomon, “shall clothe a man with rags.” And what crowds are impoverished from the lack of economy and forethought. But intemperance is the great cause of the wide-spread, deep-seated poverty with which our land is afflicted. This is too notorious to require proof. In support of it I shall merely mention, in passing, a fact recently stated by one of the Edinburgh magistrates, viz., that out of 2700 cases of pauperism in the metropolis, 2000 were caused by drink. Hence, without forgetfulness either of the state of the law or the fluctuations of trade, I reiterate, that abounding penury is chiefly self-inflicted, and that any political measure, or any philanthropic scheme, will be unavailing for improving the temporal condition of our operative classes, till industry, economy, and forethought, and, above all, sobriety, be better understood and more rigidly practised among them than they are at present. If so, then one way of benefiting them is by endeavouring to promote, throughout the community, industrious, frugal, and temperate habits. The time is come when ministers, and others who are qualified, should occasionally, during the week, deliver addresses to our workmen on the improvement of their temporal condition. It would be useful to have a course of lectures delivered to them on this subject in every town and country district—it would help to elevate them to that place of comfort and independence in the commonwealth, to which there is little doubt they shall one day reach. I believe their star is in the ascendant ; I believe the time is drawing nigh when they shall

possess a larger share of enjoyment, and occupy a higher position in society, than they now do; and therefore, as the physical and moral state of man is intimately connected, those who long for the spiritual improvement of the labouring classes should, with a view to its promotion, help to elevate them temporally—help to place them in that niche in the social edifice to which they are justly entitled, to which they are being raised, and to which, if they respect themselves, they shall ere long attain.

VI. Measures should be devised and carried out with a view to the suppression of intemperance.—Inebriety is the hydra-vice of the age, the great source of poverty, immorality, and irreligion, and by far the greatest obstruction to the spread of the gospel in the land. Slaves of this beastly sin, myriads are pauperized, morally polluted, and steeled against the charmer, charm he ever so sweetly. It is a growing conviction among Christians of every denomination, that till something effectual be done to suppress abounding intemperance in Britain, every scheme for evangelizing the working classes will be, to a great extent, neutralized. The suppression, therefore, of this monster vice is imperatively demanded, and should be set about vigorously by the friends of the people and of religion.

But the great question arises, What should be done to put it down, and so to open a wide, and with God's blessing, an effectual door for the preaching of the gospel among the masses of our hard-wrought but self-deluded countrymen? Difficult as this problem is, it imperatively demands an attempt at solution. Some allege that total abstinence is the only effectual

means of stemming the tide of intoxication, and of restoring our drunken country to habits of sobriety. Its efficacy cannot be doubted, since if men totally abstained from the use of intoxicating drinks, they could never become drunkards; never tasting the intoxicating draught, they could never reel through its effect. It is likewise admitted, that in Ireland and America, particularly in the latter country, where it has been advocated and countenanced by influential parties, it has wrought a considerable reformation. But withal, it may be questioned whether it be the *best* remedy for suppressing drunkenness, and for this reason among others, the difficulty of prevailing on the great majority to adopt its principles and to act consistently upon them. It may also be questioned whether total abstinence be absolutely necessary to secure strict sobriety, even in the present state of the country. Will nothing else cure the evil but that extreme remedy? If not, then by all means let it be applied; but if any other restorative less severe, then we would prefer its application, as it is rather injurious to make morality more stern than it really is. If the limb needs amputation, let it, without fail, be amputated; but if there is any other remedy less rigorous, let that be had recourse to. One thing must be allowed, that other practical remedies which seem fitted to heal this grievous canker, have not as yet had a fair trial, and that it seems reasonable they should be properly tested. Another thing which can scarcely be denied is, that drunkenness will never be extirpated, until by the physical and moral elevation of the people themselves, and the removal of snares, its temptations shall be greatly lessened. We should not wish these remarks to be construed into hostility to the temper-

ance movement, which has been productive of much good, and whose advocates deserve great credit, although we cannot say it is the only, nor yet the surest way in the end, of suppressing intemperance. Before specifying other practical remedies which, as we have said, have not as yet had a fair trial, and which can be prosecuted in perfect harmony with the operations of total abstainers, we would make two observations:—The one is, that total abstinence is undoubtedly the only remedy for confirmed drunkards, and the only safeguard for those who have a strong thirst for intoxicating beverages; and the other is, that Christians, who have the same noble end in view, should not quarrel about the means, but should vigorously prosecute those they think the most effectual, more especially when these means are perfectly harmonious, and when every expedient should be tried to eradicate the poisonous, deep-rooted tree which is shedding its baleful influences all around.

In adverting to those measures which should be employed for mastering the fearful sin of drunkenness, we begin by stating that Parliament might use its authority for diminishing the temptations that lead to it, by increasing the duty on the manufacture of intoxicating liquors, especially ardent spirits; by passing an enactment for the reduction of public-houses, and for their orderly regulation; and by closing, with its strong arm, every tavern during the entire Sabbath. Much good has been effected by a recent law, which keeps the door of every public-house bolted till one o'clock of the sacred day of rest; but the benefits of this legislative act would be tenfold multiplied if it included the whole of the Lord's day—if it closed every spirit-shop during the whole

twenty-four hours of that day God has commanded to be kept holy. In some such ways as we have now indicated, might the legislature advantageously interfere in this matter. Does it fear a diminished exchequer? does it fear that the diminution of the revenue would keep pace with the diminution of distilleries and taprooms? All such fears are utterly groundless. No doubt, as the sale of spirituous liquors diminished, the revenue from that source would likewise decrease; but then it is equally undoubted that the loss would be amply compensated by a greatly increased sale of other exciseable commodities. Apart, however, from the profit or loss that might ensue, our legislators should be solely guided by the bearing of their enactments on the temporal and spiritual wellbeing of the nation.

Again, we remark, that magistrates and justices of the peace, without any new powers from Parliament, can do much to suppress prevailing insobriety. They can gradually reduce the number of public-houses, and can also exercise a salutary restraint over those engaged in the sale of intoxicating drinks. But we have heard it alleged, that the reduction of taverns and taprooms would have no other effect than increasing the trade of those that remained. To this allegation we entirely demur, being strongly persuaded that the diminution advocated would sensibly diminish drunkenness. In order, however, that the decrease for which we are pleading might be really beneficial, due care would require to be exercised by the competent authorities to have every licensed house for the sale of spirits orderly conducted. With this view, it would be necessary for them to grant licences only to individuals of good character, laying down, at the same time, stringent regulations

for their guidance, and making the continuance of their licence dependent on these rules being duly observed. And, along with such precautions, it would also be necessary for those in authority to shut up, without ceremony, every disorderly house within the bounds of their jurisdiction. Assenting to all this, certain parties may object to any further interference with those already in the trade, because of the pecuniary loss it might entail on some who had no other way of earning a livelihood. To remove the scruples of all such, and to enlist their aid, we may state, it would mean time satisfy us if, to the suppression of all disreputable and disorderly houses, *no new shop was licensed for retailing spirituous liquors till the reduction was satisfactory.* It is gratifying to know, that many of our justice of peace courts and town councils are directing attention to this matter, and laudably endeavouring, both to lessen the number of taverns, and to promote the respectability of those under their surveillance. The authorities thus acting should be encouraged and supported, while those in power who are not bestirring themselves should, in every legitimate way, be stimulated to imitate their praiseworthy example, that, peradventure, the great evil under which the nation groans may be mitigated, if not removed.

Farther, the church has means of her own for the suppression of intemperance which should not be allowed to lie dormant. Ministers may frequently preach on the great sin of inebriety, together with its attendant evils; and may also exhort their hearers to discontinue and disown the more hurtful drinking customs, and to endeavour, by strict personal sobriety, and by all means in their power, to uproot this body-and-soul-destroying vice; and office-bearers should give practical effect to the

exhortations of the pulpit, by subjecting those guilty of an overt act of intemperance to the same censures as those who fall into any other sin, without winking at it as a trifling offence, as is too generally done. Moreover, all Christians, in their own sphere and locality, and in their own way, should employ whatever influence they possess for the eradication of this fearful vice. One may counsel a neighbour who is not sufficiently on his guard against inebriety; another may give lectures on the extent and evils of drunkenness, and the best means of suppressing it; and a third may disseminate publications favourable to the good cause. In these, and similar ways, may the church, through the medium of her pulpits, courts, and membership, assist, and that powerfully, in the slaying of that blood-thirsty tyrant, beneath whose tread the earth trembles, and under whose scimitar victims fall in countless numbers.

VII. Measures should be contrived, by those who have power and influence, for diminishing abounding temptations in our towns, and for making them, as far as possible, conducive to the health, comfort, and morality of their inhabitants.—Our cities are so crowded with moral snares of every description, that it is far more dangerous for the inexperienced and thoughtless to walk their streets, and to pass through their manifold temptations, than it would be for them to traverse a desert infested by numerous reptiles, and subjected to the sweep of the simoom and sirocco. But what, it may be asked, can be done for removing the dangers complained of, and for making our towns what they ought to be, the protectors, not the destroyers, of virtue and happiness? In reply, we answer—The civic authorities, besides sup-

pressing disorderly public-houses, might suppress penny-theatres, low dancing-saloons, lodging-houses to which the vilest characters resort, and where “aged ruffians ruin all that is left of juvenile virtue,” together with those infamous dens where nameless abominations are committed. In a word, they might—as far as their powers permitted—condemn and destroy all the haunts of vice within their jurisdiction; and, in whatever respect their authority was deficient, they should apply to Parliament, either to pass some general enactment for the suppression of moral nuisances, or to arm them with greater discretionary magisterial power. Is it whispered that sweeping measures of the kind indicated would be unwarrantable interferences with the liberty of the subject? We deny that they would. The end justifies, yea, demands, the means. Suppose an individual were to erect a manufactory in the heart of a city, which was poisoning the atmosphere, and impairing the health of the population, would the authorities be chargeable with wrong-doing if they ordered its removal? Assuredly not; and would they be justly chargeable with riding rough-shod over the rights of a certain class who have built manufactories of evil that are spreading moral contagion on every side, should they, in the judicious exercise of their municipal authority, command these to be destroyed? So far from doing what was censurable, they would simply be discharging their duty as Christian magistrates, if they shut every questionable rendezvous, and put their veto on every corrupting amusement. The soul is infinitely more valuable than the body, and nothing should be left undone by those in authority for promoting its welfare. At no distant period, when this land was visited by a fatal epidemic, our magistrates issued orders for

the instant removal of whatever was calculated to produce and nourish it, and exerted themselves in the most praiseworthy manner for staying its progress. And should they not seek, by the overthrow of moral nuisances, and by every other method their wisdom can suggest, to ward off those still more fearful plagues which are emasculating and destroying their fellow-citizens, and turning every city within the empire into a lazarus-house of corruption ?

But our civic dignitaries and other influential citizens might do, and ought to do, something more toward promoting the virtue and happiness of their respective towns than simply demolishing the strongholds of pollution. They should build up, and strengthen, and beautify, as well as pull down and destroy. By united efforts they might erect schools for the children of the poorer classes, build model lodging-houses, provide for the healthful, but withal intellectual, recreation of the masses by the formation of pleasure grounds, botanic gardens, and mechanics' institutes, and also promote habits of cleanliness and economy among the under-current of society. The building of lodging-houses is a scheme of the greatest importance, and it has this recommendation that, wherever tried, it has been found self-supporting. In London, three houses of this kind have been built, one for males, one for females, and one for families, at a cost of £22,000 ; which institutions yield an annual return of £1400, so that, besides being of great utility, they furnish, at the same time, a good investment for capital. The suggestion thrown out regarding healthful recreation for the people deserves special attention, as those cooped up all day in a heated atmosphere need, and in one form or other will take, a

little relaxation after the toils of the day. Now, would it not tend to keep them from destroying haunts, and to promote their true welfare, if they could repair to places like Victoria Park in Manchester, where they might recruit their jaded energies by a gentle walk in a spacious tasteful enclosure, or where they might indulge themselves in some manly, bracing amusement? And would it not also contribute to their elevation and happiness, if they had access, at a cheap rate, to the well-stored reading-room, where they could occasionally beguile a leisure hour in perusing those books and periodicals that would at once improve their minds, and enable them to discharge their social duties more intelligently and cheerfully? We commend these suggestions to the attentive consideration of the enlightened patriotic burgesses of all our towns. If several such individuals in every city would associate themselves for its mental and moral elevation, they would soon be enabled to devise and carry out measures which would purify its filthy closes, change the tastes and habits of its residents, and beautify its whole moral aspect. Even individual efforts of civic regeneration, such as those lately put forth by our Stows, and Campbells, and Lumsdens, would prove highly beneficial, tending at once to gratify and elevate our urban population, and to prepare them for the reception of the gospel.

VIII. Steps should be taken to remove every obstruction to the mental and moral improvement of the industrial classes.—One impediment of this kind is the long hours of labour in shops and warehouses, and in many branches of trade. Notwithstanding of the meliorations which have of late been effected in this matter, there is yet

ample room for more. Many shops open at an early hour, and continue open till late at night, which is actually turning men into living machines, and depriving them of those means of culture which are within their reach ; nay more, such incessant labour is so fatiguing to mind and body, that those who daily undergo it for any lengthened period, cannot be in a good state for performing family and closet duties when they retire to their homes : and there is no necessity for its being undergone, as shops can be closed at an earlier hour than at present without any loss to the shopkeeper, or without any inconvenience to the public. If by mutual agreement all were closed at the same hour, shopkeepers could be no losers, and if all remained open so long as to afford time to a few peculiarly situated to make their purchases after six o'clock, the public could not be inconvenienced. Endeavours, therefore, should be made to remove the obstruction complained of, the removal of which would be highly beneficial.

Closely connected with that now mentioned, another great hindrance to the improvement of the same class of people is the keeping open of shops to a later hour on Saturday than on any other day of the week. Places of business that are regularly shut on the other days at nine, may be seen open as late as eleven or twelve on Saturdays. Now, both to buyers and sellers this must be extremely hurtful. Shopmen who are busily engaged till twelve on Saturday night, and customers who make their marketing at that late hour, besides being unfitted for the private religious duties of the evening, will be tempted to sleep longer on the Sabbath than is consistent with the due sanctification of that holy day, yea, perhaps to absent themselves from public worship altogether, or

at least from the forenoon diet. One reason why shops are kept open so long on Saturday is traceable to the bad custom—a custom which cannot be too severely reprobated—viz., that which many masters have of paying their workmen on that day ; yea, paying them, as I have been credibly informed, just when they quitted work close on the stroke of twelve. How easily might this hurtful practice be avoided. If any difference is to be made between the hour of shutting up on Saturday and on other days, the difference should undoubtedly be in favour of and not against the last day of the week. And as far as we can see, shops might be shut fully as early on that day as on any of the rest ; at least there is no good reason for having them kept longer open on that day than on any other. Masters who defer paying their workmen till midnight on Saturday, thus compelling many a housekeeper to purchase wherever a door standing ajar may be found, and those who, from sloth or negligence, delay purchasing their Sunday provisions till late on Saturday evening, inflict a serious injury on others, and are indirectly guilty of Sabbath profanation. They may profess to revere the sacred day of rest, and may themselves repair to the sanctuary and join in its solemn observances, but they are justly chargeable with the sin of tempting others to break the Sabbath, and to undervalue eternal realities.

IX. Efforts should be made to have every thing pervaded by religion, as well as to have those who fill situations of trust actuated by it.—Care should be taken to have all corrective and benevolent institutions conducted on Christian principles and in a Christian spirit. Prisons, penitentiaries, hospitals, and every kindred

establishment, should be managed with a view to the religious benefit of those for whom they have been founded. Wherever man is, and in whatever circumstances placed, he should be treated as a being destined for eternity ; no opportunity should be lost of endeavouring to reach his heart, and to bring him under the power of divine truth. How many have persisted in their evil courses, and miserably perished, because favourable opportunities of enlightening their minds and of awaking their consciences have not been duly improved by those with whom they were closely brought in contact, and to whom they would have deferentially listened !

Next, we observe, that newspapers and periodicals, which are now so widely circulated, and which wield such a powerful influence on the community, should be religiously conducted. In thus speaking, it is not meant that they should keep polities and passing events from the people, and should confine themselves principally to theological topics ; in short, it is not meant they should closely approximate to religious magazines. Not at all. Our meaning is, that while they supply the information expected in a racy, popular style, their editorial articles, and their whole bearing, should have a religious tendency. If edited in this manner, if their whole tone was decidedly Christian, calculated to produce serious impressions on the minds of their readers, who can question but that they would be eminently useful to many whose principal reading they constitute, and whose opinions are formed and moulded by the daily or weekly organs they peruse ? Several of our best papers, magazines, and reviews, are religiously conducted, and are doing great good ; but it is to be lamented that their circulation is chiefly confined to the church-

going classes, while the bulk of our operatives, who, like Gallio, care for none of these things, devour those public prints which are either directly polluting, or negatively antichristian ; that is, characterised both in matter and tone by an absolute lack of Christian principle—viewing events and the great realities of life apart from any direct recognition of God, and that revelation in which he has made himself known to his creatures. It is this we deplore, and would wish to see remedied, and it is this which those who love the truth and desire the evangelization of the land should set themselves to remedy, by patronizing journals that are pervaded by a Christian spirit, and by using their endeavours to get them circulated among the masses, as well as by lending their aid to originate and to circulate any paper conducted on broad Christian, and therefore liberal, principles, which may be started to meet the wants of our thinking artisans and labourers.

Farther, every legitimate means should be used to have situations of trust and responsibility filled with godly, high-principled men, as those who occupy such situations must exercise a mighty influence of one kind or other on the nation. What an *immense influence* is wielded, either for good or for evil, by our legislators and magistrates ! What triumphs might Christianity soon achieve in our midst, if these, or even a considerable number of them, were enlightened, earnest Christians ! Our senators have the making of our laws, and our judges and magistrates the administering of them ; and who can tell how much depends on the laws that are made, and on the manner in which they are administered ? A single enactment may exert a beneficial

or a prejudicial effect for ages—a single judgment may have issues that eternity can alone unfold. As an illustration, is it not beyond the power of arithmetic to calculate what benefit a statute would confer that would put down Sabbath profanation by the running of trains and the sale of spirits? And is it not impossible to compute what good would flow from the impartial administration of an enactment favourable to Sabbath sanctification? How necessary, then, that our law-makers and law-administrators be thoroughly imbued with Christianity, and actuated in all they do with a supreme regard to the will of Him whose glory it should be their constant aim to promote. Yet this is frequently overlooked in their election. Men, yea religious men, are often found tendering their votes for party candidates, or candidates of brilliant powers, irrespective of their moral fitness for the office to which they aspire—conduct which ought to be avoided, if earnest Christians respectably qualified can be found within the limits of the kingdom. It is vain to expect large comprehensive measures that shall reach the root of our social evils, and remove stumbling-blocks out of the way, and secure equal justice to all classes, till our legislators be taught in the school of Christ, as well as in the school of the world—till, imbued with the spirit of the gospel, they fully realize their responsibility to God, and legislate on the broad principles of Bible policy, remembering that righteousness exalteth a nation, but that sin is a reproach to any people.

Medical men should not be forgotten in this disquisition, as their power for good or evil is incalculable. Having access to their fellow-creatures when sympathy and aid are peculiarily needed, and when they can do

more to alleviate and to cure their distresses than any others, doctors gain the confidence and respect and gratitude of their patients. To what good account may such influence be turned, at those seasons when the individuals to whose relief they minister are constrained to think of eternity, and are more easily impressed than when the glow of health mantled on their cheeks, and when dreams of ambition flitted before their imagination ? No time is better fitted to reach the heart and to touch the conscience, than the time of bodily suffering ; and none are so likely to be respectfully listened to, especially by the regardless, as the medical attendant who has secured their affections by his professional skill and attention. Great good, therefore, may be accomplished by the Christian practitioner who promptly seizes and judiciously improves his precious opportunities ; who seasonably introduces religious topics, and wisely discourses of the gospel remedy, striving to effect a greater cure than that which he was summoned to perform. When we think of this, we admire the wisdom of some of the more ancient civilized nations who made—as well as most of our uncivilized nations who make—the physician a priest, and long for the time when our physicians shall indeed be priests unto God, administering medicine to the diseased soul at the same time that they prescribe for the diseased frame, seeking to ennable their profession, to lay out themselves for Christian usefulness, and to taste the joy of him who has been instrumental in turning a sinner from the error of his ways. A loud call is now being made for medical missionaries to the poor benighted heathen of foreign and far distant lands ; but are not medical missionaries equally needed among our own countrymen ;

and would it not be promotive of home evangelization if the great body of our surgeons were men of enlightened piety—men who believed that opportunities of doing good imposed responsibility, and who were wishful to make the sickroom the antechamber to the bright realms of eternal day ?

X. A great home missionary association should be formed, for forwarding the cause of British missions.— We are aware there already exists what is called a home missionary society ; but what we should desiderate is, an unsectarian evangelistic association for the whole of Britain, to consider and further the great work of British Christianization by every available method. Without usurping the funtions of a church, it might collect accurate ecclesiastical and moral statistics—deliberate on the best remedies that should be applied to meet the existing spiritual destitution—employ evangelists to perambulate the country, and agents to lecture on home evangelization—stimulate the churches to increased activity in reclaiming the outfield masses, and afford an opportunity to those actively engaged in the great and good work to meet, and narrate and discuss their experiments, and to implore the blessing of the great Head of the church upon their efforts. At its anniversaries, legislators, magistrates, and ministers would be present, each with a remedial plan to explain and recommend which had been tested by experiment, or with some word of encouragement to give ; and at its annual meetings, too, manufacturers would be present, not to tell of new improvements they had made in their respective branches of trade, but to speak of successful plans of elevating their workmen, and of diffusing reli-

gion throughout their neighbourhood. Around the chairman of its anniversaries we might expect to see and hear such men as Lord Ashley and Dr Begg, enlarging on sanitary regulations and comfortable homes—such men as Dr Candlish and Dr Buchanan, expatiating on education at large, and on the education of the wynds—such men as Mr Dawes, recommending educational institutes with graduated fees—such men as Dr Guthrie and Sheriff Watson, dilating on the advantages of ragged schools—and such men as our Pollocks and Taskers dwelling on those moral achievements they have been honoured to effect, and which will transmit their names to posterity, surrounded with a brighter halo of glory than though they had conquered a city or founded a kingdom.

Under the auspices of this society, a journal should likewise be established for the diffusion of intelligence regarding home missions; for the insertion of any articles bearing upon them; for the friendly discussion of remedial measures; for biographies of even the very humblest who have aimed to be useful; and for cherishing a home-missionary spirit throughout the churches. An association of the kind we are recommending might perhaps be advantageously grafted on the Evangelical Alliance, which would prosper all the more that it pursued an object so needful and so practical as the reclamation of a neglected populace. At all events, its formation seems highly desirable, and we trust that it will soon be instituted, forming a rallying point for all the Christian worth and patriotism in British Christendom, and that it will continue to flourish till the whole land be Christianized, and made vocal with the praises of Jchovah.

The remedial measures enumerated may serve as specimens of those that might with advantage be adopted. They take cognizance of the whole man—both of body and soul—and seek to open up a channel for the benevolent outflowings of every one in his own sphere and in his own way. There are peculiarities connected with them which demand attention. Bestowing all due care on the soul, we must not be neglectful of the body; pointing the outcast, struggling with poverty, to the cross, we must not forget to sympathize with his hard lot, and to labour for its melioration. For doing this, our great model, the Lord Jesus, set us an example, which, we are sorry to say, has not been always imitated by men who have given themselves out for moral reformers. Faithfully and solemnly addressing his countrymen in regard to the one thing needful, and ever assigning to that its pre-eminent place, he yet compensated their distresses, healed their diseases, and even wrought miracles to relieve their bodily wants, although he often spent days of privation himself. In imitation of him, our great exemplar, we should exercise a sympathizing solicitude for the temporal wellbeing of the poor, and should prove, by the interest we take in their sufferings and the easing of their burdens, that we are actuated by a sincere desire for their eternal welfare.

Moreover, the remedies proposed give scope to the benevolent enterprises of all who seek, in any way, to advance the good of their neighbours. This is necessary, as we believe the moral health of our sin-stricken land is not to be brought about by *some one favourite application*, but by a combination of measures, even as the physical health of a patient is not to be restored and preserved by one thing alone, but by diet, and air, and

exercise, and cleanliness, and the control of the emotions, and innumerable other things beside. There is, therefore, no need of waiting for some great discovery that is to work a wonderful reformation among our people, nor is there any need of delaying operations till unanimity be obtained regarding national education, or any other measure. By no means. What is required is, that every one begin to work—aye, to work prayerfully and energetically in his own way as he has ability and opportunity. Does one attach great importance to the providing of the labouring classes with comfortable houses? Does another set a great value on the temperance movement? Does a third expect mighty results from ragged schools? To each we would say, Friend, your plan is excellent, proceed with it, and the Lord bless and prosper you. To all, indeed, who prefer one remedy to another, we would give a similar reply—we would urge them to bring their whole strength and influence to the carrying out of their favourite measure. In short, we would exhort every one to do anything but to wrangle and stand idle. “Even a degree of extravagance in such a cause may be forgiven.” Every thing, almost, we would be disposed to forgive but indifference and idleness. Put your hand then, reader, to the plough; do something, do what you can, and do it promptly and manfully. Churches and individuals doing energetically what they prefer, and are best qualified to perform, is, after all, *the measure* that will ultimately evangelize the nation. Without this, at least, any measure, however correct in theory, will be practically useless. When Demosthenes was asked, What was the first part of eloquence? he replied, Delivery; when asked again, What was the second part? he replied,

Delivery ; and, when once more asked, What was the third part ? he still returned the same answer—Delivery. In like manner, I would declare, that *diligent working* constitutes, in reality, the first, second, and third part of the best plan of christianizing Britain. Yes ! noiseless, unostentatious, persevering labour—each striving who will do most in his own locality, in his own province, and in his own way, with earnest prayer for success to Him who has the residue of the Spirit—is THE *measure* that will elevate, and bless, and save our country, making it the praise of every land.

CHAPTER V.

LAY-AGENCY ; OR, EVERY CHRISTIAN A HOME MISSIONARY.

“ But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.”—1 COR. xii. 7.

“ And let him that heareth say, Come.”—REV. xxii. 17.

THE remedial measures we have ventured to propose for the evangelization of our beloved land, contemplate the employment of a large amount of lay-agency. They are based on the principle, that all church members, according to their gifts and opportunities, should co-operate with ministers in reclaiming the wastes and upbuilding the walls of Zion. Hence it behoves us carefully to consider this particular kind of agency, more especially, as it has been alike much controverted, much misunderstood, and long neglected.

In order to avoid all misapprehension, it may be necessary to state, that the ministry is an office of divine appointment, intrusted with the discharge of peculiar and highly important duties. To clergymen alone belong the right of administering the sacraments, and of expounding the lively oracles in the pulpit, “ warning every man, and teaching every man, in all wisdom.” None but they, in ordinary circumstances, may presume to intermeddle with the dispensation of the pub-

lic ordinances of religion. And it is on the manner in which the gospel is preached, and all the functions of the clerical office performed, by qualified and authorized ambassadors, that we are *mainly* to look for the evangelization of our own and every other land. Yes! the ministry is God's great instrumentality for the conversion of the world, and absolutely essential for the maintenance and propagation of Christianity. While this must be obvious to all who understand Bible truth, and bow to Bible authority; and while it ought not, in this lax and latitudinarian age, to be either concealed or overlooked, yet it is no less evident, that ministers can be aided, and need to be aided, by their people, who, as reason and Scripture teach, are bound to give them what help they can, in turning men from darkness to light and from sin to God.

That the whole body of Christians should consecrate themselves to God's service, and share with their spiritual overseers the great work of saving souls, seems highly reasonable. God has created, redeemed, and renewed them, and has poured the oil of gladness into their hearts. He has, therefore, made them what they are, bodily, mentally, and spiritually. He has bestowed upon them all their distinguishing privileges, and inspired them with all their purifying and elevating hopes. Ought they not, then, to be deeply interested in whatever concerns their gracious Sovereign—exhibiting this interest by an entire consecration of all they have to the furtherance of the gospel, with which the divine glory is so intimately connected? If it is reasonable for the child to seek his father's honour, and for the ransomed prisoner to seek the honour of his kind benefactor, how much more reasonable is it for

those who have been purchased with divine blood, quickened by divine influence, and adopted into the divine family, to be jealous of God's glory, and to dedicate themselves, and all they possess, to its promotion, through the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom?

What appears so agreeable to sound reason is clearly taught in that blessed volume, whose authority every leal-hearted Christian cheerfully acknowledges. The Bible distinctly teaches, that all who know the truth should aid in its diffusion, and thus advance the glory of Him into whose kingdom they have been called. This is impressively set forth in the parable of the householder, who went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard; as likewise, in the parable of the two sons, to each of whom the father gave the authoritative command—"Son, go work to-day in my vineyard." In both of these parables the church is compared to a vineyard, whose proprietor, naturally anxious about its cultivation, employs his sons and servants, not in idly gazing on its luxuriance, and in feasting on its produce, but in rendering it fruitful. Does not this plainly indicate, that those whom God calls and regenerates, he expressly engages and enjoins to work, that his garden may be wholly and properly cultivated—that its barren spots may be fertilized, and those under cultivation rendered still more productive?

The parable of the talents contains a plain statement of the same great truth. From that instructive portion of Scripture, we learn, that God hath bestowed upon some Christians more, and on some fewer gifts—but all with the design of being used for the benefit of the whole human family. "Occupy till I come," is the command that accompanies the bestowal, not only of

five talents, but even of one. All, therefore, are bound, in compliance with divine authority, to make a proper investment of their spiritual capital, that, through their instrumentality, souls may be saved, the church enlarged, and God honoured and glorified. If, however, instead of laying out their talents to the exchangers, they allow them to remain unemployed, they wantonly waste Heaven's choicest gifts, and provoke the Lord to withhold from them additional favours. Yet, alas! many neglect to improve their gifts and graces. This holds true of numbers who are largely, as well as of numbers who are scantily, endowed. Not a few of both classes fail to improve what has been intrusted to them for the general good. Weakened by worldly influences, and yielding to natural slothfulness, they dream away life listlessly and carelessly, to the great injury of their own souls, as well as the souls of others.

Without pursuing this train of reflection farther, we proceed to observe, that—

The same important truth we are endeavouring to establish is beautifully illustrated in the 12th chap. of 1 Cor. In the 4th verse of that chapter, the apostle tells us, "that there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit." By these gifts are meant the different endowments bestowed in different degrees on the various members of the church. And for what purpose are they conferred? This is stated in the 7th verse, where it is said, "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal." The manifestation of the Spirit denotes those endowments he bestows on the several members of the church, through the bestowal of which he makes himself known. According to this interpretation, we are here very distinctly informed

that all the gifts, however diverse in their character or degree, conferred by the Comforter on Christians, are conferred upon them with the design of their being employed for the common good; that diversified gifts are imparted by the Sanctifier to believers for the benefit of others, even as God puts rain into the clouds, and heat and light into the sun, for the express purpose of watering, warming, and enlightening the earth. After stating that the different endowments of particular Christians are distributed unto them for the common utility—for the enlargement and edification of the church—the apostle next illustrates this sentiment by a beautiful similitude taken from the use and mutual dependence of the various parts of the human body—a similitude to which we shall again have occasion to refer in this chapter.

Other passages of the Word of God furnish abundant proof of the matter under consideration. Says Paul, “As we have opportunity, let us do good unto all men.” And again, he says, “Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.” And Jesus himself, through the apostle John, says, “Let him that heareth say, Come.” These are plain statements that admit but of one interpretation, which is, that all influenced by gospel motives and principles should anxiously and constantly seek the welfare of all their fellow-creatures without distinction. Farther still, on this subject, the great apostle of the Gentiles, in the last chapter of the Romans, says, “Salute Urbane, our helper in Christ,” and “Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labour in the Lord.” And in Philippians iv. 3, we find him saying, “And I entreat thee also, true yoke-fellow, help those women who laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellow-

labourers, whose names are in the book of life." Tryphena and Tryphosa were females, and yet they are mentioned as labouring in the Lord, as helping forward the great work of conversion. Moreover, as we have just stated, Paul exhorts an associate in the ministry at Philippi to help those women that laboured with him in the gospel, *i. e.* to give them what assistance they required in discharging those spiritual duties which they were voluntarily and zealously performing. Here is a distinct recognition of female agency, which is a clear proof that all Christians, whether men or women, and whether in or out of office, are to gird themselves for the work of the Lord, and to make themselves serviceable.

The last proof we shall adduce in support of what we are proving, is some of the figurative names given to God's people, as, for example, the salt of the earth, and the light of the world. Such appellations prove that, by their actions and instructions, believers are the moral conservators of the world, the people by whom it is kept from universal corruption, and through whom it is to be evangelized. One of the names we have specified clearly indicates that the followers of Jesus, whose minds are enlightened, and whose hearts are renewed, are not to conceal, but to exhibit their religion, that others may thereby be benefited; yea, that they are to labour, by all means in their power, to dispel the darkness in which the world is enveloped, by shedding around them the pure light of the gospel. In a word, as the name alluded to imports, and as Christ enjoins, Christians are to let their light so shine before men, that they may see their good works, and glorify their Father who is in heaven.

Enough, surely, has been advanced to prove that all who name the name of Jesus are imperatively bound to shake off their natural slothfulness and selfishness, and to look abroad with a pitying eye on poor perishing sinners, using whatever appliances they can command, energetically and prayerfully, for their conversion. Yea, the various passages which have been adduced and commented on for establishing this truth, throw around it such a flood of light, and present it under such a variety of aspects, as to indicate, beyond dispute, its overwhelming importance. Yet how lamentable to think that the priesthood of the people, so honouring and ennobling, has been by themselves sadly slighted and despised. During bygone ages, the vast majority of professors, under the erroneous impression that they had nothing else to do with upholding and extending religion than merely contributing to the bare maintenance of their pastors, have satisfied themselves with that, leaving their spiritual guides to attack the foe unaided and unsupported. Such fearful remissness has acted as a dead weight on the aggressive movements of the church, and has contributed its own share to the Egyptian darkness which overspreads the land. It is, however, matter of devout thankfulness, and one hopeful symptom of revival which we gladly hail, that the erroneous notion alluded to is fast dying out, and that many large-hearted and liberal-minded zealous Christians have already taken the field, and are doing good service in the cause of Christ.

All who love their Lord and Master Jesus Christ being commanded to live and labour for him, it is to be expected that they have some suitable qualification for evangelistic work. This reasonable expectation Scrip-

ture clearly confirms. We learn from those parts of it just quoted, that the whole body of believers, people as well as pastors, are more or less qualified by Him who called and regenerated them for spiritual labour. As the parable of the talents teaches, some have received many, others few, and all at least one talent. None are entirely unfurnished, and therefore none are entirely unfitted for labouring in the vineyard, and for winning souls to Jesus. It will not, therefore, do for any to exempt themselves from home-missionary work, on the plea put forth by not a few, that they really cannot do any thing, or, at least, very little. Any excuse of this kind is untenable and worthless, when their Lord and Master has given them some endowment, however small, positively enjoining them to use it, and when they are accountable only for the right employment of what they have received. Instead, then, of mourning and repining, and hiding their talent in the earth, they should earnestly pray that He, by whom it was bestowed, would enable them to lay it out advantageously, that he may receive his own with usury. Their prayer should be that of Gerhard, which has thus been translated:—

“ To others many talents Thou hast given,
One little drachm alone to me.
O give me grace, all bounteous King of heaven,
Well to improve that little drachm for Thee.”

Connected with these observations, it cannot be too often and too earnestly repeated, that great results may be achieved by those possessed of few gifts. Experience has amply verified this, as will be shown in its proper place, under the head of “Examples.” The accomplishment of good depends more on the praying spirit, the resolute mind, and the diligent hand,

than on the commanding intellect, the sagacious head, and the elevated position; so that great things may be done for Christ without rare qualifications. As fertility is not so dependent on the mountain torrent and the swollen river, however sublime and overawing, as on the gentle flowing stream and the soft falling shower, that attract little notice, so moral fruitfulness is less connected with eminent endowments that excite admiration, than with common gifts that call forth no remark, but which are skilfully and perseveringly applied.

We would next observe, that while God distributes his gifts variously, and while much good may be done by those who have few talents, or even but one, yet some are specially fitted, by the possession of particular gifts, for particular departments of duty, to which they should accordingly devote themselves. Individual Christians, as is well known, differ not only in the *amount*, but in the *kind*, of their endowments. One is distinguished by one strongly-developed quality, another by another. Says the Apostle, in 1 Cor. xii. 8-10, “For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another propheey; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues.” Some of these were undoubtedly extraordinary endowments, conferred on the early Christians for extraordinary purposes. Others of them, however, were ordinary; and hence, along with other ordinary gifts, are bestowed on different Christians in every age. Is it not an undeniable fact, that

there is a great variety among the gifts of God's people, and that each genuine follower of Jesus has his own peculiar and prominent gift? One is distinguished for his genius and learning; a second, for his sagacity; a third, for his eloquence; a fourth, for his prudence; a fifth, for his influence; a sixth, for his activity; a seventh, for his boldness; an eighth, for his perseverance; a ninth, for his prayerfulness; a tenth, for his faith—and so on, almost without end. As a necessary consequence, some must be better qualified for discharging certain duties than others; so that their qualifications point them to the place they should occupy—to the special class of duties they should perform—even as a man's natural abilities and leanings mark out for him his worldly occupation. Is a Christian an accomplished orator? The place for him to exercise his gifts with advantage is the pulpit or the platform. Is a Christian rather learned than eloquent? He should either occupy a professorial chair, or devote himself to teaching through the medium of the press. Is a Christian a prudent counsellor? Give him a seat in church-courts, and consult him in the organization of Bible, and missionary, and tract societies. Is a Christian of moderate acquirements apt to teach? Let him give his time and attention to the Sabbath school, and to domiciliary visitation among the neglected masses. Is a Christian possessed of wealth and influence? He is called on to use his means and his position in society so as to do good on the widest possible scale. Is a Christian's only talent earnest piety? Let him speak the good word, set the good example, distribute the little tract—and, above all, give himself to prayer; pleading, with a strong faith, every promise that all the means employed

in converting a lost world may be blessed and prospered.

And it should never be forgotten, that all true believers, with their special yet dissimilar endowments, *are all needed*. Scripture illustrates this no less beautifully than it teaches it explicitly, by comparing the church to the human body. The body is composed of many distinct muscles and membranes, all performing their peculiar functions, and all so indispensably necessary and so mutually dependent, that “the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee; nor again, the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more, those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary.”* So is it in the church, the body of Christ. All its members, according to the office they hold, and the gifts they possess, have their appropriate functions to discharge; and are every one of them useful and needful, and dependent on one another for their own welfare, and for the efficiency of the church as a proselyting institution. Those who fill the highest offices, and rejoice in the possession of the most shining talents, require the aid and co-operation of those of lower rank and meaner attainments, in order to perform their duties to the greatest advantage—in order to establish and strengthen the whole church, and to make a successful inroad on the domain of formalism and paganism. They require such assistance, as the work allotted to the church is so vast. Apart from the foreign field—sufficient to give ample employment to a million of missionaries—what a large and inviting field is there at home! Multitudes among ourselves are perishing for lack of knowledge; while error, under every in-

* 1 Cor. xii. 21, 22.

sidious form, is completing their destruction. Hence, every one in his own sphere, and in his own way, is called upon to use his gift for the benefit of his country. Says James, in that admirable work, "The Church in Earnest,"—"We have an evil to contend with so gigantic in its strength, so diffused in its influence on all sides of us, and so infectious and malignant in its efforts, *that nothing short of the engagement, the energies, and the earnestness of the whole church can cope with it.* The whole church must be employed for the conversion of the whole country. The levy, *en masse*, must be called out. The enemy is coming in like a flood. Infidelity and immorality are invading us. The tocsin must be rung; the beacon-fire must be kindled on every hill of Zion; the sound must float from every tower and every battlement, 'To arms! to arms!' and every man that can shoulder a musket, or bear a pike, must take the field, and array himself against the foe. There is not a single member of a single church, male or female, young or old, rich or poor, but what ought to be engaged in *personal efforts* for the salvation of souls."*

If the services of all, whether liberally or meagerly endowed, be no less necessary than positively demanded, ought they not to be promptly and cheerfully rendered? How can any professing Christian satisfy his own conscience, if he withhold what God demands, and what the cause of God requires—if he keep back, when needed, what he received from the Lord to be expended in his service? None, not even the feeblest, can hoard up his gift and be blameless; nay, he cannot allow it to lie dormant without preventing the healthy action of that mystical body of which he is a member, and

* "The Church in Earnest." By John Angell James, p. 101.

thus retarding instead of forwarding the work which lies near his dear Redeemer's heart, and upon which every Christian is bound to concentrate his undivided energies. All therefore should begin to work for God, using their talents, whether many or few, to the best advantage, laying themselves out for extensive usefulness, that nothing, as far as they are concerned, may be left undone for the ingathering of souls—the great duty to which the church is called, and for which she is richly equipped.

In doing so—in working for God—it behoves true Christians to inquire what are their talents, and how they can most profitably dispose of them. These two inquiries, so intimately connected, are of the highest importance, and should be prayerfully prosecuted by all who are wishful to do the greatest amount of spiritual labour with the best prospect of success. What gifts have I received, will greatly aid in answering the question—Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And how may a genuine disciple ascertain his gifts? We reply, by prayerful examination, and by consultation with judicious friends. If he carefully and prayerfully examine into the state of his knowledge, his piety, his aptness to teach, and his moral courage, he will be enabled to know something of his fitness for one class of duties rather than another. Should he be at any loss, then he may consult with those who are qualified to advise him, and who are anxious to see every one rightly employed. It is of vast moment for each individual to have some acquaintance with his gifts, as many enter on departments of duty for which they are utterly unqualified, and as others withhold their labour where it would be highly efficacious. Both classes, besides in-

juring themselves, retard the erection of that spiritual edifice whose foundation is laid in Zion, and whose walls every Christian delights to see progressing.

Having learned something of his gifts, the real disciple of Christ should next inquire, "How and where can I best exercise them? What is my particular department, or what are my particular departments of labour?" In prosecuting this inquiry, he should first ask what duties have a *preferable claim* on his time and attention. This should be his first question, as he must perform such duties according to the best of his ability, before he can lawfully multiply his exertions. Now, there is one duty which to one class of persons—professing Christian parents—has a prior claim to all others; and that is the godly upbringing of their families. Whatever may be left undone, this should be performed—whatever may be neglected, it should not be the culture of domestic piety. Parents are bound to exercise what talents they possess, in promoting the spiritual welfare of their offspring. Let none, then, neglect what is so imperatively demanded, and what of itself is of paramount importance. Here there is room for the exercise of the best gifts, and here all may work for God most effectually—this is a field of home missions which all who leave uncultivated are as inexcusable as they are infatuated. But it may be cultivated without absorbing the whole available time of those whom it immediately concerns. Most parents may instruct their children, and yet have leisure for doing something additional. There are many, too, who, having no families to train up for heaven, can devote their whole spare time to whatever field of labour they choose. Now, to

all who have some unoccupied time which they can dispose of for God, the question is, How are they to decide on the department or departments of duty they should occupy ?

In helping them to decide, we would advise them mainly to have regard to fitness. Next, they should be guided by their inclination. As a man's heart must lie to a trade or a profession to succeed in it, so to be successful in any department of Christian exertion, there must, in addition to suitableness, be a taste or liking for it. None will excel in what they do not passionately love. If, however, they take pleasure in their work, it is amazing what proficiency they may attain by indomitable perseverance, and what wonders they may achieve. Strong affection produces enthusiasm which levels every mountain, and overcomes every difficulty. After fitness and inclination, a man should have regard to situation and circumstances. He should ask what are his opportunities for pursuing the walk of usefulness for which he seems adapted, and to which he is strongly inclined. If, for example, it be Sabbath-school teaching, he should ask himself, what opportunity he may have, either in connection with the congregation of which he is a member, or throughout his neighbourhood, for imparting instruction to the youthful mind. If domiciliary visitation be his appropriate sphere, he should inquire, what openings he may have for visiting the outfield population, and pressing Christ on their acceptanee. And finally, when doubtful about his line of action, he who wishes to be useful should seek direction from God, who giveth to all men liberally, and who will show the path of duty to such as are really desirous to know it. Prayer will shed

celestial light on what is dark and perplexing. Besides, none should enter upon any undertaking without prayerful inquiry—without asking counsel from Him whose they are and whom they serve.

It is now necessary briefly to glance at a few of those departments of usefulness which Christians, as they see cause, may profitably cultivate. As many of these have necessarily been enumerated and illustrated in the two preceding chapters, we shall merely make a selection of the more common, some of which have not been previously mentioned.

Prayer and *example* are two well-known methods of doing great good which are frequently enjoined in Scripture, and which all who have the spirit of Christ should and will be continually employing. Those who neglect these modes, who are not instant in prayer for the spread of the gospel at home and abroad, and whose conduct does not harmonize with their profession, cannot expect to be useful in any department of Christian exertion, while those who are prayerful and consistent, who hold incessant intercourse with God, and maintain a deportment in strict harmony with the principles they profess, may reasonably hope that, besides aiding the good cause by their supplications and consistency, they shall be prospered in every attempt they may make to benefit others.

Another method of doing good is *religious conversation*. The people of God often mix with those who, like Gallio, care for none of these things, and not unfrequently enter into familiar converse with them. In doing so they may adroitly introduce religion, giving such advice as may be deemed necessary; or they may

drop a remark calculated to awaken thoughtful reflection, without either giving offence or exciting suspicion. It is astonishing what an impression may be made by a judicious, seasonable observation. Says Solomon, “A word spoken in due season how good is it;” and again, “A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.” Study, then, dear reader, acceptable words; have “your speech always with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how to answer every man.”

A fourth means of usefulness is *epistolary correspondence*. Letter-writing is a way of doing good which has been profitably practised by some devoted Christians, and which may be advantageously employed by those in any measure acquainted with penmanship. Harlan Page used this method with great effect. He wrote letters, and sent them in every direction, beseeching men to bethink themselves and to return to the Lord. To a young man to whom he had been requested by another to write, he wrote as follows: “Dear sir,—Understanding that you have been led to discover the necessity of religion, I have presumed, though unacquainted with you, to write you a few lines. You are sensible that there is a God—that by his holy law the soul that sins must die—and that all men have broken this law, and are exposed to his just indignation through the countless ages of eternity. O, sir (for you will suffer me to speak freely), are you of this number? Do you stand on the borders of eternal wo, where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched? But stop—the contemplation strikes horror into the soul. Let us view the enrapturing scene of redeeming love. Souls that have sinned are not altogether hopeless.

When all were condemned by sin, then it was that the Lord Jesus Christ gave himself an offering, bare our sins, and suffered the inexpressible agonies of death, that we poor guilty rebels might have life. This blessed Saviour is ready to receive you. My young friend, all things are ready. Cast yourself, just as you are, on him for pardon, sanctification, and salvation. Delay not. While you delay, you aggravate your guilt. Call on God day and night; search the Scriptures, and let not your reluctant heart prove your ruin for ever. Death may be near. Resolve, if you perish, to perish pleading for mercy. I entreat you delay not, but this moment go to Christ, and take of the waters of life freely."* Here is an eminent example of plain, faithful dealing, through the medium of epistolary correspondence. It is scarcely needful to mention, that letter-writing, to be useful, should be gone about prudently and prayerfully. Without exercising a sound discretion, this mode of benefiting others may be productive of evil rather than of good. Imagine not, however, that it requires great ability and scholarship to ply this engine of usefulness. By no means. Whoever can employ the pen may write with effect to their friends and acquaintances, and to all whom they know to be ungodly, but whom they cannot presume to address personally. The individual from whose correspondence we have quoted was a mechanic. Let all, then, who have the requisite qualifications, seek, by letter as well as by word of mouth, to benefit their fellow-men, whose souls will never die. Let relatives, especially in conducting their correspondence, speak plainly and faithfully to one another about the great salvation, "exhorting one another daily while it is called to-day,

* Memoir of Harlan Page. By William A. Hallock. Pp. 17, 18.

lest any of them be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." Relations, generally speaking, it is to be feared, are far from being faithful in this respect. Too often, in the friendly epistle, all things are spoken about saving the one thing needful—saving that which belongs to the soul, and which is intimately connected with man's happiness in time and eternity.

A fifth mode of doing good is *Sabbath-school tuition*. A sixth is *book and tract distribution*. A seventh is *household visitation*. All these having been previously illustrated, we deem it unnecessary to add any thing additional in this place.

The last method of Christian exertion we shall mention is that of *district exhortation*. By this we mean the holding of meetings for prayer and the reading of a portion of Scripture, with familiar remarks thereon, in particular districts during the week, and also on Sabbath evening, when the usual services of the sanctuary are over. It is quite scriptural for laymen to teach and exhort in this manner, as appears from Rom. xii. 7, 8; where special mention is made of teachers and exhorters as a class of instructors in the church—men who appeared to have differed from ministers in this, that they simply taught and exhorted, without pretending to administer the ordinances of religion. Those who thus labour would, of course, require suitable gifts—would need to have a comprehensive knowledge of the Scriptures and the faculty of ready utterance; as, otherwise, their services would rather be hurtful than beneficial. The Independents, Methodists, and Moravians, largely use this agency, and sometimes with great advantage. Even the Episcopal Church, with all its devotion to clerical regularity, and with all its jealousy of lay agency, has

in some cases called in, with great effect, the aid of lay-visitors and lay-exhorters. In his second charge, when Bishop of Chester, the present highly-esteemed Primate of England said—"Excellent results, far beyond expectation, have been found to proceed from a system of this kind—from the simple reading and exposition of Scripture to such a party as can be conveniently assembled in the houses of the poor. Wherever these lectures have been introduced, the congregations increase, the sacramental attendance is larger, and the signs of a divine work become more visible." This is a notable testimony in favour of district exhortation, from an influential and rather unexpected quarter. In not a few Presbyterian congregations, the more zealous elders and members are accustomed to hold meetings for prayer and the reading and exposition of Scripture, in stated places, for the benefit of all who may choose to attend. Although most of these are rather congregational than evangelistic, yet some of them partake largely of the latter character; which kind, we are happy to believe, are fast increasing. The labours of those who conduct them are mostly gratuitous. Several churches, however, are beginning to employ paid exhorters, so as to enable them to devote either the whole or a part of their time to teaching and exhortation. This is an admirable plan, which has been too long neglected. Wealthy congregations can easily secure the whole time of one or more lay agents; while some poorer congregations may be enabled so to compensate one of their number who has the requisite gifts, as to allow him, without injuring his family, to devote a few hours daily to home-missionary work.

Such is a rapid glance at some approved methods of

usefulness. But, besides employing one, or more, or all of these, believers should ever be trying to discover new walks for themselves. The science of Christian usefulness is but yet in its infancy. Plans, hitherto unknown, may be discovered and prosecuted with great advantage to the cause both of home and foreign missions ; and therefore, those who have the requisite ability and means should, in addition to the diligent use of tried methods, be devising and setting in operation whatever new methods may seem suited to their locality, or the circumstances of the country or the world at large. During the present century, many noble plans have been contrived and set agoing, which are telling with wondrous effect on the kingdom of darkness. But more are urgently needed, and more might be called into action, if Christian experience and ingenuity were more bent on the subject. Let all, therefore, who are possessed of the inventive genius give attention to this matter.

It is, however, the smaller number from whom any thing *new* in remedial measures can be expected. While this is perfectly clear, all sincere Christians should be inquiring for which of the departments of known duty they are best fitted; or, in other words, what is their place in the great work of saving souls. Every one, anxious to be really useful, should make this inquiry; as there is an appropriate place in the church for every one, and as every one can do most good when he occupies that place. Every church-member should not only work, but he should seek to do his own work; as, in doing that, he will be most successful. None, however, should delay working, because not exactly sure of what they are best fitted for ; as, though unable, perhaps, to determine their proper place, they should begin to do

something. Nothing can justify idleness. A commissioned, qualified, responsible labourer, the believer can stand idle only at his peril. Be then, dear reader, always at work. Never stand a single moment unemployed. If you are always working, you may expect soon to discover your appropriate sphere of labour ; while, perhaps, ways of doing good may open to your view, of which, as yet, you have never dreamt. Always, then, be working ; always be looking out for opportunities of benefiting mankind ; and always be diligent in improving each opportunity that presents itself. Do much, and be striving to do more.

“ Still let thy mind be bent—still plotting where,
And when, and how the business may be done.”

We next proceed to point out the spirit and manner in which lay agents should conduct all their operations. *And, 1st, They should ever aim directly at conversion.* —They are to endeavour, not merely to make men acquainted with gospel truth, but to bring them under its influence—not merely to make them regular church-goers, but consistent Christians, whose delight is in the law of the Lord. We call special attention to this, as there is reason to fear it is practically forgotten by many who attempt to work in the vineyard, and who are desirous to be serviceable in the great cause. Numbers, it is to be feared, anxiously wishful to benefit their neighbours, do not directly aim at the conversion of those children they instruct in the Sabbath-school, and of those outcasts they visit in their own dwellings. Too generally do they rest satisfied with pressing upon them external reformation—attendance on the public ordinances of religion, family and secret

prayer, and so forth—without, along with such exhortations, at once directing them to Christ, and urging them, without delay, to embrace him as their only and all-sufficient Saviour. This ought not to be so. In all their intercourse with the ungodly, they should give them to understand, that every thing short of conversion is worthless; and should never cease exhorting them to press into the kingdom of God. Let it, then, be distinctly understood and constantly remembered, that, to labour successfully for the Lord, we should aim directly and pointedly at the conversion of sinners. “If we trifle with this point, and suffer it to be superseded by others, however important in other respects, we shall be in danger of the dreadful requisition. This should be the first and principal care of parents and the instructors of children; it should distinguish the labour and solicitude of Christians in every department—in the Sabbath-school—the Bible-class—Christian correspondence—intercourse with the world—visitation of the sick—advice given to the poor—and all discourses delivered in the house of God; whatever is studied should be studied for that end; and, whatever is taught should be taught so as to promote that design; our hearts should be ever set upon this work of love—the rescue of men that are ready to perish; and prayer should rise up to God perpetually in their behalf—in the closet—in the family—in social meetings—in the church, and in public worship; every where, and at all times, saints should be found travailing in birth for souls, as men that must give account.”*

2dly, Lay labourers should be constantly actuated,

* The “Dreadful Requisition,” by the Rev. Charles Stovel.—P. 103.

both by grateful love to Jesus, and by ardent love for souls.—Remembering all Christ has done for them, and all that they owe to him, they should be impelled by strong affection to please him, by seeking to advance his cause. Destitute of this constraining motive, their services cannot be acceptable, nor are they likely to be successful. If they do not burn with love to the Saviour, when working for him, his approbation and blessing will be withheld—and what fruit, therefore, can be expected? Seek, then, Christian friends, to glow with love to Jesus, when you engage in his work, that, instead of labouring languidly and unprofitably, you may labour cheerfully and usefully. Moreover, you should be inflamed with love to perishing souls, as well as to the Saviour, in order to meet with success—in order to bear down with effect on the kingdom of darkness. You should consider what the ungodly have at stake—and what the Lord Jesus did to save them—that your love toward the perishing may glow and burn increasingly. Oh! when you think that they stand exposed to eternal condemnation, and that Christ suffered and died to save them from this fearful doom, the very thought of which chills the blood, you can scarcely fail to be filled with an ardent desire for their salvation. And it is when the kindlings of your hearts are enlisted in their behalf—it is when you look upon them as dropping into perdition, notwithstanding the free offer of salvation made to sinners—and when you are thereby animated to save them from impending ruin—that you go forth in that spirit which will give warmth to your words, and draw down the divine blessing on all your undertakings.

3dly, Those who begird themselves for any depart-

ment of usefulness, should ply their work with unremitting diligence.—They should be instant in season and out of season, prosecuting their labours of love with persevering constancy, and untiring energy of action. This is their duty, as God has claims upon them for their whole spare time, and as there is so much to be done, owing to the vast multitudes who are living without God and without hope in the world. Besides, it is only by constantly and energetically prosecuting the great work of saving souls, that Christians can expect to meet with that success they so ardently desiderate. As in worldly matters unwearied diligence is an ordinary requisite of successfulness, so is it in higher and more important concerns—even those that belong to the kingdom of Christ. If the Christian labourer does not keep untiringly at his work—if he does not perseveringly follow after it, never allowing his spirits to droop, nor his energies to flag—it is highly probable that his expectations will be disappointed. Be his department of labour what it may; be it Sabbath-school teaching—tract distribution—household visitation—or district exhortation—he must never cease working with untiring diligence, as long as health and strength permit. He must ply his holy vocation as reapers do their sickles in harvest, who never lay them aside till the whole of the yellow grain is reaped; or, as warriors use their armour, who never doff it till the battle is ended. Thus must the man work, though maligned and persecuted, who really expects to be surrounded with evident signs that he is not running and labouring in vain.

4thly, All who enter into the vineyard should prosecute their great work prayerfully.—Their labours should be mingled with earnest believing prayer, which

is absolutely essential to success. They may so use the appointed means as to leave nothing undone, on their part, to secure the salvation of those on whom they operate; but all will be unavailing without the blessing of God and the teaching of his Spirit. And how are these to be obtained? The reply is obvious,—only through the all-availing efficacy of prayer. Nothing but fervent supplication will prevail on God to prosper his people in that to which they put their hand—nothing but earnest persevering entreaty will prevail on him to bless their efforts for the conversion of souls. While, then, the saints work with all holy constancy and devotedness, they should unceasingly pray for that divine aid so absolutely necessary for producing the desired result. “Prayer touches the only spring that can possibly ensure success. By speaking we move man, but by prayer we move God. It is through the medium of prayer that the littleness and meanness of man prevail with Omnipotence. The prayer of faith is the only power in the universe to which the great Jehovah yields; he looks upon every other power as more or less opposed to him, but he looks upon this as a confession of man’s dependence, as an appropriate homage to his greatness, as an attraction which brings down his divine agency to the earth.” Be, then, ye working Christians instant in prayer for the blessing of God upon all your exertions for the good of others. Let prayer precede, accompany, and conclude all your endeavours to be useful to the neighbourhood in which you reside. You will labour powerlessly till you realize the importance of prayer and proceed with your work, looking up to the God of all grace for assistance, and crying out amidst your efforts, “Awake, awake, O arm

of the Lord, awake as in the ancient days, as in the generation of old."

Having proceeded thus far, it may now be proper to inquire into the good which has been done by lay agency. What benefits have accrued from it, so as to recommend its adoption at this moment, when it is evidently so much needed? Its benefits have neither been few nor small, as an appeal to facts will prove. The Moravians and Methodists largely employ lay agents, the employment of whom, and the keeping in constant harness of all their converts, constitute the great peculiarity of their ecclesiastical system. And is it not a matter of history, that by means of lay labourers both of these denominations have been honoured to do eminent service in the cause of Christ? Great have been the evangelistic achievements of the Moravians in Greenland and the West Indies; in these distant and widely separated fields, where they were beset with no ordinary difficulties, have they been instrumental in christianizing the savage, and in rearing many a temple to the worship of the one living and true God. And to what instrumentality is their great success in these benighted regions attributable? In no small degree to the agency of native converts, who, after having given themselves to the Lord, gave themselves heart and soul to his work. Again, who is ignorant of the rise of Methodism, and of its beneficial results? Who does not know that by the honoured, though much vilified body of Methodists, religion was not only kept from expiring among the masses in the southern part of the kingdom, but greatly extended? Now, it was not only owing to the apostolic labours of Whitefield and Wesley, and

other distinguished preachers of the sect, that Christianity flourished in connection with it, but also owing to the vast numbers of lay agents that were employed, and that laboured with untiring diligence and burning zeal for the conversion of their perishing fellow-subjects. While the regular preachers were in labours abundant, and met with unwonted success, they enjoined their converts to work, they commanded every one whose lamp was enkindled to go and kindle the lamps of others, and thus multitudes were enlightened, and saved, and sent on their way rejoicing.

What has been advantageously practised by one denomination should be tried by others. Those engaged in mortal strife never scruple to borrow from the tactics of each other whatever may be regarded as an improvement. And if enemies, amidst the din of battle, will deign to learn from one another, surely Christian friends, engaged in the same sacred cause, should throw aside all narrow prejudices and party jealousies, and profit by each others' experience. This is alike common sense and Christian wisdom. Guided by this principle, some of the Episcopalian clergy have, in imitation of the Methodists, organized throughout their parishes a modified system of lay agency. One of them writing, in 1830, on the subject, says, "Every one who joins their society" (*i. e.*, the society of the Methodists), "finds some occupation suitable to his talent, however humble, and immediately becomes a working man for the community. Why should not this be the case in the Church of England?" And again, the same excellent clergyman says, "Wherever lay agency has been attempted, God has honoured the means used by an abundant outpouring of his Holy Spirit, and, in some instances, the moral

aspect of a whole parish has undergone such a change, that places notoriously wicked have become as remarkable for piety and orderly conduct, while the minister has found his influence greatly strengthened, and his public ministrations better appreciated and understood."

In Scotland, lay agency was employed with great effect during the time of the Reformation, though from that period till the beginning of the present century it was little practised there, except in the Highlands and Islands where, to this day, it has been maintained to the extent, at least, of holding fellowship meetings of a somewhat irregular character. Throughout these northern districts, most of the pious men belonging to the same parish have, for nearly two centuries past, been in the habit of assembling at stated intervals, generally once a-week, for prayer and the exposition of Scripture, or rather for the discussion of some particular point previously agreed upon. While all these meetings cannot certainly receive unmerited praise, while, in some instances, they have been productive of harm, yet generally they have been highly beneficial to the Highlanders, keeping religion alive among them in places where the pulpit was totally inefficient, and the sanctuary, in consequence, almost entirely deserted. Often has it happened that, while the incumbents of particular parishes were slothful or unsound, piety has flourished among their parishioners by means of fellowship meetings. To these it is in no small measure owing, that sound doctrine, enlarged Scriptural knowledge, and vital godliness, have always prevailed in many of the Highland districts. This speaks favourably in their behalf, and in behalf of lay agency in general. Had

there had been similar assemblies held in the Lowlands during the last century, Christianity would not have been so attenuated under the reign of moderate domination. But in these parts of the island, the labours of laymen were then almost unknown. Now it is beginning to revive throughout all the British churches in every district of the kingdom. Not a few have begirt themselves for Christian exertion, and are labouring with commendable diligence in the vineyard. Some are circulating religious books, some are busily engaged in Sabbath-school teaching, some are visiting from house to house, and some are acting as catechists or lay exhorters; and, as facts proclaim, their labours have been so blessed by the great Head of the Church as to encourage them to persevere, and to stimulate all who love the Lord Jesus, and who compassionate perishing sinners, to follow their example, that, in concert with, but *in subordination to*, a stated ministry, the foundations of Zion may be strengthened, her breaches repaired, and her whole structure enlarged and beautified.

Sensible of the benefits resulting from lay agency, we are not insensible to its evils, both in regard to the agents themselves, and to the church at large. It cannot be denied that some lay labourers become captious, self-sufficient, and troublesome, and that others even embrace erroneous tenets—secede from the denomination with which they are connected, and draw multitudes along with them into the whirlpool of error. Such mischevious effects have been produced by various causes, especially by this, that ministers in general have not, as in duty bound, recognized, directed, and controlled the agency of laymen. The removal of this cause would help to obviate the evils just mentioned, as also

to pave the way for the efficient employment of every one according to his gift, under the influence of those who are regularly ordained to the sacred office of the ministry, and whose hands must be strengthened, not weakened, by any professed coadjutors. Were pastors to recognize the principle we are advocating, and to train up their members to act as home evangelists, directing, superintending, and encouraging them, we verily believe, that in general there would be little of which to complain, while the health of the church would be recruited—its organization completed—and its conquests extended.

Seeing that lay agency, notwithstanding of some attendant evils which might be lessened, if not removed, has for the most part wrought beneficially, is it not to be lamented that so few members of the different churches are working members; and that some who are, have but meagre qualifications for being efficient workmen? And is there no remedy for this deplorable state of matters? Is there nothing that can be done to increase the band of Christian lay labourers? Think so who may, we are none of these. On the contrary, we believe that effectual means may be used for increasing both the amount and efficiency of this kind of agency, for raising up a host of properly qualified agents, that shall mightily help to occupy and cultivate, in subordination to church order, all the barren wastes of our beloved land. What are these?

One is, elevating the tone of piety throughout the churches.—The reason why so few labour in the vineyard must be principally attributed to the want of ear-

nest religion among professing Christians. It is impossible to doubt this, inasmuch as those strongly influenced by the truth, can scarcely help devoting themselves to the christianization of their country. They are evangelists, if I may be allowed the expression, in spite of themselves. The love which glows in their heart toward their Saviour constrains them to devote themselves to the advancement of his cause—to consecrate themselves to his service. If this be so, surely one great means of multiplying diligent labourers, is to multiply earnest Christians, who would choose for their motto that of Paul—" For me to live is Christ." But it may be asked, How is this latter multiplication to be effected ? How are ardent disciples to be increased ? We reply, By all available means, such as faithful preaching—special meetings for a larger effusion of the Spirit—mutual exhortation—and the perusal of those publications that are pervaded by a high-toned spirituality. In these ways, godly ministers and godly people should seek to raise the spiritual temperature, assured that in proportion as professors are spiritualized, will they abound in the work of the Lord.

Another method for procuring enlightened lay agents is preaching on the subject of Christian exertion.—Even men of decided piety require to have their duties explained and enforced, more especially any such duty as that of home evangelization, which has been long overlooked and neglected. Those, then, who occupy the pulpit should frequently bring this duty under the notice of their hearers, pointing out its necessity—the various ways in which it may be performed—and the deep obligations under which they are laid to give themselves wholly to it. Had this theme occupied a

more prominent place in the ministrations of the sanctuary, both the church and the nation would have presented a different aspect—more would now have been engaged in breaking up the fallow-ground, while in the vineyard there would have been a smaller breadth of uncultivated soil. This cannot be doubted ; but it is to be hoped that the great subject of which we are treating, will in future receive that share of attention in our Sabbath-day services which its importance demands. It is to be hoped that pastors of every persuasion, who cannot be ignorant of the prevailing spiritual destitution, will entreat their audiences, by every moving consideration, to labour for the spiritual enlightenment and spiritual freedom of their benighted and enslaved fellow-countrymen. To act thus is their bounden duty—a duty which, if rightly performed, will give a mighty impulse to the christianization of Britain, an object of overwhelming importance.

*A third method of increasing the number of qualified agents is the institution, connected with every congregation, of what I would designate AN EVANGELISTIC NORMAL SEMINARY, for the special training of Christians to the work of home evangelization.—*While all who love and fear God may, without any initiatory lessons, begin to evangelize, and that too with good effect, yet it is evident they would be better fitted for succeeding in this arduous employment by suitable preparatory training ; and, might they not receive this education from their spiritual guides, whose duty, doubtless, it is to see that they are thoroughly furnished unto every good work ? Might not ministers open a class for the express purpose of qualifying the more promising of their people to work in the vineyard—doing good to all, as they had leisure, ability,

and opportunity? Surely they might; and, we humbly think, they ought. At this little school of the prophets, pastors might deliver short and familiar courses of lectures on the evidences and leading doctrines of Christianity—on the nature and requisites of Christian exertion—on Sabbath-school tuition—domiciliary visitation—and other kindred subjects. Along with simple prelections of the kind now indicated, they might take every opportunity of enforcing Christian obligation, and of inspiring their class with an ardent desire of living for some useful purpose. And, farther, they might make their students accompany them, alternately, to the houses of the home-heathen; instructing them, by example as well as by precept, how to speak to the careless, so as to gain their affections, and to win them to the Saviour. The benefit of such normal training, for walks of usefulness, would be incalculable. It is astonishing why it has been so long neglected; why advanced Sabbath-school scholars have been allowed to leave their classes, without receiving specific instructions how to make the most of their spiritual capital—how to labour most advantageously in the service of Him who, in giving them their endowments, said to each of them—“ Occupy till I come.” We trust that this crying neglect will be remedied—that evangelistic normal seminaries will be regular appendages of every congregation—and that numbers, especially of our generous youth, whose lot has been cast on portentous times, will avail themselves of their advantages, that they may be fitted for teaching others, and for thus helping to stem the tide of ungodliness, which is threatening to bear down before it all that is pure and lovely, and of good report.

While means should be used to train up all church members to do something—and while all should seek to stir up the gift that is in them, bringing their entire energies to bear on home evangelization—yet, care should be taken to keep lay agency subordinate to church order—to keep it, in short, in its own proper place. Some sects, by whom it has been, and still is, largely and even successfully employed, do not bestow sufficient attention on its due regulation, and the consequence is that, along with less good than might otherwise be accomplished, there is considerable irregularity, confusion, and extravagance.

Another observation, which should not be omitted, is, that lay agents should by no means neglect to attend on the public ordinances of religion. In some cases they are guilty of this neglect, as they address meetings and teach schools during the usual hours of divine service—thus depriving themselves of the benefits of public worship. In ordinary circumstances, this is decidedly wrong, and ought to be discountenanced and discouraged. Lately, when residing for a few weeks in a large town in the north of England, I went to a “revival meeting” among the Methodists. In returning to my lodging, after its dismissal, I entered into conversation with an individual who had been at the same meeting. Being led, from what passed between us, to ask him what place of worship he attended, he promptly answered—None. This reply rather startled me, as all he had said led me to believe he took no little interest in religion. I at once told him I could not reconcile his answer with the tenor of his conversation. “Oh,” he replied, “I have got too much to do to attend the church. In one village, I exhort during the forenoon

and afternoon of every Sabbath; and, in another village, I teach a Sabbath-school—all my time, you see, is engaged—I have no time to spare for attending the house of God.” I told him I was happy to hear he was so interested in home missions; and that I wished, with all my heart, there were more like him; but I also told him, that he was bound to wait upon the means of grace himself, so that, in attending to the spiritual good of others, his own spiritual improvement might not be injured. Whether he has followed the advice that was tendered, I have no means of knowing; but it is an advice that I give to every reader of these pages who may begin to care for others. None are at liberty, systematically, to absent themselves from the sanctuary; and none can do so, for any length of time, without seriously injuring their souls.

This zealous individual went to one extreme— instructing the ignorant and arousing the careless, at seasons when he should have been in church getting his own lamp trimmed. But, alas! the great majority go to the other extreme, and do nothing—or, at least, next to nothing—to advance the cause of our common Saviour. Yes; the great majority who frequent the sanctuary, and surround the communion table, make no efforts, either during the six days of the week, or on the morning and evening of the Sabbath, to turn their godless neighbours from the error of their ways. What want of consistency! what want of compassion is this! A few years ago, a fire, which it baffled all efforts to extinguish, broke out in a magnificent steam-vessel, as she was speeding her course across the ocean, conveying a large number of passengers. As was reported at the time, another steam-packet descried her at a distance en-

veloped in flames, and making signals of distress ; but, instead of hearing the unfortunate ship, and rendering her assistance, she passed along, and left her to her fate. As might be expected, such inhuman conduct aroused the public indignation, and was severely censured by the press. And, certainly, it could not be too emphatically condemned. Yet, alas ! there is reason to fear that the largest number of professing Christians are chargeable with greater inhumanity than that referred to ; inasmuch as they see their godless neighbours standing exposed to quenchless flames, without ever warning them of their danger, and labouring to effect their deliverance. If that man is justly regarded as a monster who sees his neighbour occupying a perilous position, without hastening to his relief, what shall be said of the professor who lives among men hurrying onward to irretrievable ruin, without pitying their woful condition, and seeking to arrest them in their downward progress ? Public resentment may not be awakened against him ; journalists may not hold him up to merited scorn ; but is he really less unmerciful, or less worthy of reprobation, than those who, having the ability, render no assistance to the passengers of a flaming vessel or the inmates of a burning tenement ?

Let every professing Christian, then, be up and doing. Surely every church member should be a working member, attempting to do what he can to save the perishing. And, if this were the case—if the whole church were earnestly at work—we might soon expect to behold the moral aspect of the country changed. There cannot be less than 2,000,000 of communicants in Britain, all of whom, by their profession, declare that they are disciples of Christ, and that they have consecrated them-

selves to his service. Now, if all these, as in duty bound, were seeking the conversion of sinners, and if a tenth of them even, besides assisting to train the young on Sabbath, *were only to devote one hour weekly* to domiciliary visitation, our outcasts would not long continue to be counted by millions.

But, as already stated, great numbers of our membership do literally nothing. They hide their talent in a napkin, instead of laying it out to the exchangers. They come and go to the house of prayer; but, as far as active service is concerned, they are perfectly useless. And this is the case not merely with many whose time is limited, but likewise with multitudes who have abundance of leisure to work for Christ, and to make themselves useful. Such a state of matters is alike the sin and scandal of the church, and must be altered. Oh, for a voice of thunder to awaken the slumberers! that every member of the whole church after the apostolic model may be employed, and that each may be striving who shall do most for effecting the salvation of his country. "Yield yourselves to God as those who are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God."

"Haste, haste, and preach in every place
The Saviour's boundless love and grace;
That thousands who are yet enslaved
May in these gospel days be saved."

CHAPTER VI.

HINDRANCES.

“ For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's.”
—PHIL. ii. 21.

IN previous chapters, the great need of home evangelization has been demonstrated, various remedial measures propounded, and the duty of every Christian taking part in home-missionary work proved and illustrated. Moreover, it has been shown that the whole body of believers have some suitable gift which may be usefully employed—that great good may be done by those possessed of few gifts—that some are specially fitted, by special endowments, for particular departments of duty—and that all the followers of Jesus, with their varied qualifications, are urgently needed as home missionaries. If these things be so—if, in our land, there is work for every Christian, which he can and ought to perform—might we not expect to see the entire Christian community bestirring themselves in behalf of their spiritually destitute countrymen? This might be expected; and the time, we hope, is not distant when this expectation shall be fully realized. But the church, meanwhile, is comparatively asleep. Intrusted, qualified, commissioned, she continues to slumber; allowing the multitude by whom she is encompassed to sleep the fatal sleep of death. Inactivity is one of her besetting sins. She sits

at ease, like a ship becalmed on the bosom of the mighty deep. A handful of her members, it is true, are beginning to bestir themselves in the work of the Lord, and are anxiously desirous to be useful; but the great body of them make no adequate exertions to christianize their thoughtless fellow-subjects. How comes this to pass? What keeps them from the heavenly employment to which they are called? What, in a word, are the main hindrances which paralyze the energies of the church, and prevent her watching for souls like one who must give account?

One great hindrance is the sickly state of religion.—The low and languishing condition of godliness in every denomination is confessed and lamented by all whose hearts are smit with love to Jesus. That earnest, self-denying, heroic spirit by which it was anciently characterized and animated, has wellnigh evaporated, leaving behind merely historic recollections. Deadness, feebleness, low-toned spirituality, pervade the best of our churches. The Spirit seems almost gone, and even the things which remain are ready to die. This deplorable state of matters is *the main impediment* to evangelistic effort—it diminishes that interest which professing Christians should feel in the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom, and acts as a drag on all the aggressive movements of the church. Benumbed with spiritual torpor, professors have little sympathy for poor perishing sinners, and little desire to honour the Redeemer, and hence they look as if they were unconcerned spectators on the mighty contest which is being waged between the Prince of peace and the prince of the power of the air, the spirit which now worketh in the children of disobedience. Partaking but in small

measure of the Christian spirit, they are far more interested in their worldly occupations and in ephemeral topics, than in the advancement of Messiah's kingdom. Alas ! that it should be so ; but it cannot be otherwise when vitality has all but expired.

Besides lessening the interest professors should take in the conversion of souls, shrivelled Christianity prevents them exercising that self-denial which the work of the Lord requires. To be efficient co-workers with God, no ordinary self-denial is necessary. Those who labour effectively in the vineyard must deny themselves worldly pleasures and pastimes, and must accustom themselves to hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ. The spare hours that others spend in frivolity and amusement and profitless indulgences, they must employ in visiting the afflicted—in teaching the ignorant—in arousing the careless—and in doing good as opportunities present themselves. The superfluous money that others expend in needless gratifications they must lay out upon the poor, and upon books and tracts for the thoughtless sons of men ; yea, upon agents who may give themselves entirely to the conversion of the godless. In short, they must spend and be spent in the service of Him who loved them and gave himself for them ; they must sacrifice for their Saviour whatever his cause demands, and for promoting his cause they should not only hourly live, but also be willing at any time to die. This is the self-denial which those bent on doing good must undergo, but which none, save really devoted Christians, will ever think of enduring. The generality of professors may applaud those who consecrate themselves to the laborious work of excavation, and in answer to some powerful appeal, may con-

tribute their mite toward the carrying out of promising philanthropic schemes, but they lack that self-denial which enables men personally to engage in home missions. This arises either from the want of genuine piety, or from its extreme feebleness; so that to the low state of Christianity is attributable that deficiency of self-denying effort, which is so obstructive to home-missionary labour.

As languishing piety hinders professors from taking a deep interest in the spread of the gospel, and likewise prevents them submitting to that self-denial which its diffusion demands, it must necessarily render them all but inactive, thus impeding the christianization of our father-land. What men take little concern about, and what they will not make sacrifices for, it is evident they will not laboriously help forward. They must first feel strongly, and prepare themselves for the endurance of no ordinary hardships, before they act energetically and courageously. It was deep sympathy and a bold heart which carried Howard the philanthropist and Brainerd the missionary through their untold toils and dangers. In like manner, men must partake of their spirit before they ever tread in their footsteps—they must be baptized with their devotedness, before they will ever bring untiring activity to the great cause of truth and righteousness. But, oh, it is vain to look for much of their earnest and moral heroism amidst the deadness and formality of British churches! As a natural consequence, supineness and inactivity, those powerful antagonists of Christian exertion, almost universally prevail, so that little is done toward the spiritual regeneration of our beloved country. Religion must be revived before its professors, as a body, actively engage in its propaga-

tion—before those who enrol themselves as soldiers of the cross catch the devoted spirit of their great Captain, and labour with unconquerable zeal to leaven the whole nation with the gospel, the great work to which they are called, and for which they are responsible.

A second great hindrance to home evangelization is, the various engrossing objects of the age.—We live amidst a perpetual whirl of business and agitation, which directly tends to occupy the attention, and to absorb the mind. The spirit in which trade is carried on amongst us imparts to it an absorbing character. Owing to the number engaged in commercial, manufacturing, and trading pursuits, and to the keen competition thereby called forth, merchants, manufacturers, and master tradesmen, become so fully occupied and engrossed with their secular engagements, that they have often little leisure and less inclination to attend to their own spiritual concerns, and, therefore, they cannot be expected to have time and taste for attending to the spiritual wellbeing of their neighbours. Trade and commerce, with all their bustle and rivalry, and fluctuation, are prejudicial to their personal piety, and must consequently cool their missionary zeal, and hinder them from doing what they might in behalf of the spiritual elevation of their brethren according to the flesh. And, while traffic, as it is conducted, acts prejudicially on its master spirits, it tells no less unfavourably on all their subordinates whose livelihood is therewith connected. The prevailing competition and unsteadiness attendant on merchandize not unfrequently involve many of the operative classes in those financial embarrassments which, when unsanctified, sour their temper, deaden their sympathy, and engross their thoughts, weakening, if not

destroying, what religion they possess, and thereby un-fitting them for doing good to others.

Another engrossing object of the present day is politics. Every man is, more or less, a politician, and the writer is not one of the number who condemn this in the abstract ; he is not one of those who hold that professing Christians should eschew political matters altogether. On the contrary, he holds it is equally their right and their duty to take an interest in the affairs of the state, which are so closely interwoven with their own welfare and the common weal. But while they ought to study the science of government, and to interfere in the settlement of political questions ; yet, with many, polities are so keenly and eagerly pursued, as to engross their whole time, and to indispose them for the higher and holier duties of religion. Not a few live and breathe amidst political excitement ; they can talk about nothing else but their own views of those great questions which divide the nation, and regard every one as destitute of patriotism who does not think and act along with them. Men who are thus enamoured of polities, who can scarcely look at religion, save through their discoloured medium, and who perpetually busy themselves with their discussion, as, alas ! is the case with vast multitudes, necessarily injure their own souls, and waste that time which should be devoted to the promotion of their neighbours' spiritual and eternal wellbeing.

Other engrossing objects which greatly impede home missions, are the prevailing taste for amusement which has infected all classes, from the highest to the lowest, and also the craving thirst for knowledge, which is often gratified at the expense of spiritual improvement and philanthropic employment. These we merely

specify without waiting to illustrate. Let us, however, mark and avoid them, let us beware of pursuing even things lawful *so immoderately*, as to weaken our religious impressions, and to consume that time which should be devoted to the service of our heavenly Master, whose we are, and to whom we are responsible for the use we make of our time and all our talents.

A third great hindrance to home evangelization is our sectarianism.—By this I mean the division of the church into various sects, caused by differences about points of doctrine and government, some of greater, others of lesser importance, which are generally magnified to a disproportionate extent, and maintained with a spirit of bitterness and exclusiveness, altogether unwarranted by the matters in dispute. Sectarianism, as just defined, retards the moral and spiritual elevation of the neglected and degraded masses. It dwarfs the piety of believers, embitters their spirit, and distracts their attention, thus unfitting and indisposing them to engage as they ought in holy enterprises. It likewise produces a fearful waste of gospel agency. By means of its extensive prevalence, far more ministers are employed in superintending the existing body of professing Christians than would otherwise be necessary. In some localities, there are two or three times the number that are absolutely required for ministering to those who attend public worship, and profess to belong to the church of Christ. One English town, with a population of about 7000, has eight resident pastors, the average attendance at each of whose churches does not exceed 300, so that all the church-goers might be formed into three congregations, which could be superintended by three efficient clergymen. Four working ministers for

such a town would be quite sufficient, although the whole of its inhabitants professedly belonged to the visible church, and repaired every Sabbath to the sanctuary. We give this as an example, but it is no solitary one, and hence denominationalism wastes agencies which might be more usefully employed. It is extremely difficult to procure any thing like a sufficiency of working ministers; and yet, by our unseemly divisions, a vast number are kept half employed. If the church was united, instead of being divided, hundreds of qualified labourers might be spared for evangelizing our towns and villages, and forming new congregations; and thus it is plain that denominational differences greatly impede the extension of the church, and the consequent conversion of souls within this realm. Our divisions, moreover, prevent co-operation in home-missionary enterprise among those who hold the fundamental doctrines of the gospel. Jealousies and jarrings spring up so thick among the different sections of the church, that they regard each other with distrust and suspicion, and, consequently, stand aloof from one another. Actuated by a sectarian spirit, they will not seek, by prayerful, united consultation, to discover some enlarged plan of home missions, which, if efficiently wrought, might, under God, be productive of great results. Instead of doing this, and co-operating as brethren in the good cause, they seem almost forgetful that they are servants of the same Master, who are sent to labour in the same vineyard, under the same responsibility, and for the same great end. This must be very detrimental, as cordial co-operation could not fail to be highly beneficial. More good would evidently be done by united systematic effort, than by the isolated attempts of the

different sections of the church ; and hence the lack of co-operation arising from prevailing disunion must retard the dissemination of the gospel among those who know it not, and who, on that account, follow the devices of their own imaginations. Farther still, sectarianism staggers many of the ungodly, and naturally prejudices them against Christianity, and inclines them to despise its offered terms of mercy. Failing to understand why we should be so divided about what we say God has plainly revealed for our belief and guidance, they rashly construe our divisions into a proof of the falsity of our creed, and the insincerity of our profession, and get quit of our importunity by alleging they are at a loss what sect to believe. And finally, our disunion vexes and quenches the Spirit, by means of which our best attempts are often rendered abortive.

In these ways does sectarianism obstruct the work of the Lord within our borders. Instead, therefore, of being lauded and fostered, it should be discountenanced and discouraged. Every effort consistent with the maintenance of sound doctrine should be made to heal the divisions by which the church is distracted, her beauty marred, and her usefulness impaired. Nothing should be left undone to eradicate schism, and to promote that union our Lord so earnestly supplicated, and which is fitted and destined to tell so favourably on a lost and guilty world. Meantime, while our differences exist, let us judge charitably of each other, and let us co-operate, as far as practicable, in the common cause of saving souls. “ Whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same things.” As far as we can agree, let us labour harmoniously together ; and where we cannot as yet agree to

act unitedly, let us work amicably, though separately, striving, in the way we judge best, to enlighten our blinded countrymen, and to advance the kingdom of our common Lord in this land, which has so many claims on our Christian sympathies and efforts.

A fourth great hindrance is, the currency of certain fallacies which we shall particularize.—One of these is a prevailing notion that each individual is responsible to God only for his own personal actions. Many members of our churches, we have reason to believe, are swayed more or less by this opinion, so fearfully erroneous, and so utterly destructive to every work and labour of love. While each, doubtless, is answerable for himself, yet each, also, is in a measure answerable for his neighbour—while every man must give an account of the deeds done by himself personally, he must also render an account of those deeds of his fellow-men which *he either influenced or might have influenced.* This may be somewhat startling, but it is undoubtedly true. We are all accountable for whatever errors our neighbours embrace, and for whatever sins they commit, through our negligence, our unfaithfulness, our want of duly improving opportunities for good. If we do not diligently use all possible means to turn the wicked from their wickedness, and to bring them under the power of the truth, we are partakers in their sins, and answerable to God for their everlasting destruction. Many familiar illustrations may be given of this alarming statement. If, for example, we saw a person drowning, and did not put forth strenuous efforts to save him from a watery grave, would we not be accessory to his death, and fairly chargeable with it? or, if we beheld a house enveloped in flames without warning the inmates of

their danger, and assisting them to escape and to extinguish the devouring element, would we not be responsible for the consequences? or, if we were able to extricate a neighbour from some perilous situation, and yet never made the attempt, would we be blameless? In like manner, if we see poor sinners perishing, without pitying them and exerting ourselves to save them, can we be altogether free of responsibility to God for their blood, if they quench the Spirit and die impenitent? Assuredly not. Indeed, what was originally addressed to Ezekiel, though chiefly applicable to the watchmen on Zion's towers, who are solemnly set apart to watch for souls, applies to every professing Christian:—"If thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thine hand."* What a solemn consideration! Away, then, with the foolish idea that a man is accountable only for his own belief and his own personal actions. Remember, ye followers of Jesus, that ye are responsible for others exactly in proportion to your ability and opportunity for benefiting them, and that God will one day reckon with you for the use you have made of your talents. Imprint this on your memory, engrave it, as with the point of a diamond, on the inmost recesses of your heart, and perpetually act under a conviction of its solemnity.

Another fearful fallacy is, a current notion that salvation can be obtained without faith in Christ, and its constant voucher and attendant—a strictly religious life. Not a few professors have a lurking idea, that it is possible for sinners to be saved apart from faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and a strict regard to all his command-

* Ezek. xxxiii. 8.

ments. This opinion they may neither publicly proclaim nor be able to defend when assailed, but they have a strong conviction of its truth. Carried away by mere feeling, and destitute of large comprehensive views of Scripture, they think it hard that those vast multitudes among ourselves—apart altogether from the heathen abroad, to whose salvability in their idolatrous state they are partial, but a discussion of which we waive—who do not cordially accept of the Saviour, and walk holily and unblamably, should be shut out from the kingdom of heaven, and consigned to eternal misery. A matter, however, of this grave importance, is not to be settled by sympathy and human reasoning, but by an impartial appeal to the Word of God. What, then, saith Scripture in regard to it? Let us open and read. Says Christ himself, “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have eternal life. He that believeth is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already; because he believeth not on the name of the only begotten Son of God.” Again, he says, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me;” and again, “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” Once more he says, “If ye love me, keep my commandments.” These, and other similar passages, prove that those, and those alone, who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God and Saviour of the world, and who show their faith by new obedience, shall be saved from coming wrath, and received up into glory; and that all others, already under the sentence of condemnation, shall, if they remain impenitent, have that sentence, in all its extent, inflicted upon them. This

being the authoritative deliverance of the law and the testimony, it is plain that faith and holiness are absolutely essential to salvation, and that any opinion to the contrary is as false as it is dangerous. Indeed, if any could be saved without faith in the Mediator, which is uniformly accompanied by good works, then all could be saved; so that his great atonement, which cost him more than finite imagination can conceive, must have been altogether unnecessary. But what man, acquainted with the mere rudiments of Christianity, does not perceive the absurdity of this conclusion? It is, therefore, futile to imagine that any can escape condign punishment, and effect an entrance into heaven, except those who depend on Christ for salvation, proving their dependence by holy, persevering obedience. To think differently is to overlook the plainest statements of revelation, and to be more charitable than God himself. To think differently is to practise a strong delusion upon ourselves, and to weaken our convictions of present duty, to the great injury of poor, perishing sinners. Let us, then, firmly hold what is as clear as the sun at noonday—the absolute necessity of faith and holiness as a passport to the mansions above; and let us labour to convert the unconverted with all the fervent earnestness and unwearied diligence which such a momentous doctrine inspires.

A third fallacy is, the common notion that efforts for the reclamation of the neglected masses are almost, if not altogether, useless. So corrupted and degraded are the great majority of our outfield population, and so hostile are they to all that is good, that many regard their conversion as utterly hopeless. Often has the writer heard professing Christians allege, that it is a

waste of time, and strength, and means, to ply our godless non-professing countrymen with the offers of salvation ; as they are so thoroughly hardened, and so averse to the gospel, that, despite of all that can be done, they will hold fast their iniquity. We admit that, as a whole, they are so fearfully vitiated, and so prejudiced against the truth as it is in Jesus, that it is no easy matter to prevail on them to listen attentively to the gospel message, far less to lodge conviction in their hearts, and to win them to the Saviour. Admitting this, we nevertheless thoroughly repudiate the opinion that their conversion is all but impossible, and that, therefore, it is vain to make the attempt. With such a sentiment we have no sympathy, as it is opposed to Scripture and to fact. Are we not taught in the Bible that some of the greatest sinners have been brought to repentance, moulded into the divine image, and adopted into the divine family ? And do we not learn, from the progress of the gospel both in our own and in other lands, that many of the most abandoned characters have been convinced of sin, and led to embrace the offered terms of mercy ? Infidels, libertines, extortioners, robbers, both among ourselves and throughout the world at large, have been turned from the error of their ways, and made obedient to the divine will. Instances innumerable might be specified. One hundred and fourteen convicts on board a convict ship, the *Earl Grey*, were lately converted through the judicious arrangements and indefatigable exertions of the superintendent surgeon, Dr Browning. In another ship of the same kind, one hundred and fifty-six, out of three hundred and eight convicts, were to all appearance brought to a knowledge of the truth through the labours of the same distinguished philanthropist. If,

then, the most wicked and the most worthless have been reclaimed, and impregnated with the pure principles of the gospel, is it to be supposed that the present race of home-heathen are beyond the reach of every effort? If, by prayerful, well-directed, untiring exertions, the very refuse of the earth—the very offscouring of society—have been made to exclaim, “What shall we do to be saved?” may not similar effects be produced by similar instrumentality? This cannot be denied; and hence it is absurd to maintain that the reclamation of even the worst of our populace is utterly hopeless, and a thing not to be contemplated and attempted. Such a theory is the joint offspring of weak faith, inexperience, and inactivity; and ought to be rejected, repudiated, and exposed, by those who wish to be useful themselves, and to set an example to others of persevering philanthropy.

The last current fallacy we shall mention is, an opinion held by many professors that they can do very little individually; and hence it is needless for them to attempt any thing. Multitudes who believe that something great could be achieved by the united efforts of the whole church, are yet persuaded that, singly and separately, they are altogether impotent for good. They don't despair of making an inroad on the vast field of home-heathenism, if there were a national union for this purpose; but they are under the impression that they can do little or nothing by themselves. It is their belief they could as soon roll back the bounding billows, or level the highest mountains, as do any thing effectual by their isolated efforts toward the evangelization of their country. But this is utterly fallacious. It is doubtless true that union is strength, and that more could be done by co-operation than without it; but still

it is evident that individuals have done, and can do, great things unaided and alone. It is astonishing what many devoted men have, by the blessing of God, achieved single-handed. Some, individually, have been instrumental in converting hundreds; and others have begun movements that have resulted in the conversion of whole parishes, and that have stirred up many to consecrate themselves to the work of the Lord. Howell Harris, Harlan Page, Dr Browning, and others, have singly done great things. It will not, therefore, do for any one to stand idle, by setting up the plea of being able to do but little; as he may, with help from above, be able to do much. But, although all may not be enabled to do what a few have done, why should they not attempt to do what they can, however little that may be? Although unable to convert many, why not endeavour to convert one? Although unqualified to instruct the adult, why not try to teach the child? Although destitute of the requisite talents for expounding the Word to the careless, why not give that Word to those who want it, telling them, at the same time, to peruse its pages? However little a man may be able to do, why not attempt to do that little? It is because this is not universally attempted that so little in the aggregate is done, and that the nation is sinking lower and lower in the scale of degeneracy. What is wanted, with God's blessing, to regenerate our country, and to make its moral deserts rejoice and blossom as the rose, is *the combination of the littles of the whole body of professors—the combination of the individual efforts of all who are fitted to work in the vineyard.* Let none, then, argue, because they cannot do much, therefore they may be excused doing any thing; as all that is needed is, just that they

and all others should do what they can. Let me add, that, instead of any perplexing themselves about what they may and may not be able to accomplish, they should be laying themselves out for usefulness, and looking up to God for assistance; assured that they are responsible only for the manner in which they work, and that their labour in the Lord shall not be in vain.

“ Must I my brother keep,
And share his pain and toil;
And weep with those that weep,
And smile with those that smile;
And act to each a brother’s part,
And feel his sorrows in my heart?

Must I his burden bear,
As though it were my own;
And do as I would care
Should to myself be done;
And faithful to his interests prove,
And, as myself, my neighbour love?

Must I reprove his sin;
Must I partake his grief,
And kindly enter in,
And minister relief;
The naked clothe—the hungry feed—
And love him, not in word, but deed?

Then, Jesus, at thy feet
A student let me be;
And learn, as it is meet,
My duty, Lord, of thee.
For thou didst come on mercy’s plan,
And all thy life was love to man.

Oh, make me as thou art!
Thy Spirit, Lord, bestow—
The kind and gentle heart
That feels another’s wo;
And thus I may be like my Head,
And in my Saviour’s footsteps tread.”

CHAPTER VII.

ENCOURAGEMENTS.

“ And, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.”—
MATT. xxviii. 20.

IT is desirable that every one who begins an arduous work should be aware of its obstructions and difficulties, as this knowledge will enable him partly to obviate them, and as it will tend to prevent him getting readily disheartened and discouraged. No less is it to be desired that he should know its incentives, in order that he may be animated to prosecute the undertaking with his undivided energy, and to bring it, if possible, to a successful termination. Powerful inducements help to sustain the heart, and to keep men constantly engaged in the prosecution of their enterprise, despite of every opposition and every discouragement. It is for this reason that we now proceed to enumerate some of the many encouragements which impel us to labour assiduously and hopefully in the great work of home missions. While, no doubt, we should be guided solely by duty, irrespective of impediments or stimulants, yet, constituted as we are, encouragements cannot fail to be useful, especially when there are so many things to damp our ardour, and to cool our zeal.

One encouragement, and the first we shall mention, is derivable from the achievements of Christianity in all lands,

both in ancient and in modern times.—The gospel has triumphed gloriously throughout all countries during the past, and is at present gaining fresh laurels both at home and abroad. When proclaimed originally among bigoted and hypocritical Jews, and idolatrous and degraded Gentiles, by whom it was hated, vilified, and opposed, it nevertheless subdued many of them, and gained their friendship and support. Despised by the world as the quintessence of foolishness, opposed by the subtle sophistry of learned rabbies and philosophers, assailed by the force of the greatest kingdom that ever existed, it grew notwithstanding, gathering converts from all classes and from all characters. Thus it progressed and triumphed during the early period of its history, giving proof at once of its heavenly origin, and of its power to convert the whole race of mankind. It was doubtless temporarily checked during what has been appropriately termed the dark ages; but even then, amidst the scoffs of an ignorant laity, the raillery of an illiterate priesthood, and the hostility of despotic governments, who pursued its very appearance with the fires of persecution, it retained its hold of not a few, and even occasionally added to its numbers from among the most deadly and debased of its enemies. Curbed for a while by Popish and persecuting powers, the Christian religion at the Reformation burst asunder its chains, shone forth in all its pristine majesty, and turned many of its deadliest enemies into its warmest friends. *Then*, in a very short space, it spread over the European continent, challenging investigation, leavening high and low with its principles, and changing the moral aspect of society. *Then* it penetrated the thickest darkness, dissipated the grossest superstition, melted the hardest

hearts, and counted its adherents, not by thousands and tens of thousands, but by millions and tens of millions. Kingdoms, at that time fettered and degraded by the galling yoke of Romanism, quickly threw it off, and rejoiced in that liberty with which Christ has made his people free, exhibiting, in a brief period, unmistakeable evidences of the change they had undergone. Take Scotland for an example. Prior to the Reformation, it was so enthralled and demoralized by Popery and its mummeries, that licentiousness, profanity, and falsehood very generally prevailed throughout its whole extent. But at that time it abjured Popery, and embraced Protestantism, evidencing the change by a rapid moral transformation. In a brief space, those vices by which the land was disgraced and degraded, were supplanted by all the Christian virtues in rich luxuriance. In the course of twenty short years, its barbaric natives, under the mild transforming influences of the gospel, were as distinguished for every virtue as they had formerly been for every vice. An oath was then seldom heard, untruthfulness was all but unknown, and the worship of God was established in almost every family. What a wonderful moral transformation, then, did this land undergo at the Reformation! Religion at that time triumphed similarly in other countries equally barbarous and demoralized. And ever since that blessed era it has, amidst the din of arms, the opposition of courts, and the resistance of infidels and pseudo-philosophers, held on its way gloriously and triumphantly. Ever since that memorable epoch it has, in the midst of political convulsions, and the onset of every foe, not merely maintained its ground, but actually enlarged its territory and increased its numbers. From that time,

famous in history, down to the present day, what enmity has it disarmed! what assaults has it withstood! what conquests has it achieved! It has been persecuted in all lands, but it has always been conquering, always growing, always extending itself in every direction. Since the middle of the eighteenth century, it has performed marvellous achievements in many benighted nations, whose soil had never previously been trod by the messengers of glad tidings. The East and West Indies, Greenland, Tartary, the Cape of Good Hope, New Zealand, Australia, the South Sea Islands, and other places too tedious to enumerate, all bear witness to the recent triumphs of the cross. During the last hundred years, particularly during the last fifty, many barbarous climes have been comparatively evangelized—the gospel has morally transformed their wild aborigines, teaching them to seek their happiness, not, as was their wont, in the battle and in the chase, but in the service of Him who died that they might live. And even now is the gospel, through the instrumentality of Duff and Wilson, and other apostolic labourers, triumphing on many a foreign shore. Seldom does a mail arrive from our colonial possessions without conveying to us the joyful intelligence that some, trained in all the superstitions of idolatry, and wedded to all its immoralities, have renounced their false creed and their heathenish practices, and embraced the truth as it is in Jesus, resolved, through divine aid, to maintain their profession unmoved. The glorious gospel, even now, in foreign and far distant lands, is displaying its divine energy, turning the moral wilderness into a moral garden, the savage into the saint, the zealous idolator into the zealous Christian.

As our holy religion has thus triumphed, and is thus

triumphing; as it has spread itself through a great part of the world in the face of the fiercest opposition, every where enlightening and subduing those who were sunk in ignorance and sin; and as it is now gaining large accessions to its ranks among the barbarians of inhospitable regions, surely we may be encouraged to hope that, if perseveringly propagated, it will penetrate the densest masses of British heathenism. Being as powerful now as ever, and having many advantages for its diffusion in this land of peace and freedom, it is but reasonable to hope, that it will be at least as successful in the lanes and alleys of our towns, as it was in those countries where it was persecuted with fire and sword, and as it is at present in the East and West among nomadic tribes and barbarous hordes. Remembering what the gospel has done, and is doing, let us be encouraged to ply the most degraded of our countrymen with the offers of salvation; remembering the past and the present achievements of Christianity, amidst circumstances the most unfavourable, let us proceed in our home-missionary work, thanking God, and taking courage, assured that, with the divine blessing, our labours will be abundantly and increasingly successful.

A second encouragement to prosecute home evangelization is, the signs of revival and union which the church is exhibiting.—The church in the aggregate, as we had occasion to notice, is in a dead and divided condition. Though this be as lamentable as it is undeniable, yet there are many cheering symptoms of renovated life and harmony. Religion in many places is assuming a healthier tone. The desire manifested by not a few of all the different evangelical denominations for faithful spiritual preaching—the holy walk, godly conversation, and

devotedness of many professing Christians—the numerous religious societies that have lately been organized, together with the wisdom, liberality, and zeal with which they are supported—the deep interest manifested by vast numbers of every sect in home and foreign missionary operations—and the awakenings that have recently taken place in several districts—these and other gratifying tokens all indicate that Christianity is uplifting its drooping head, and beginning to assume something like its native power and beauty. Along with increasing vitality and earnestness, there is a growing desire for union among the enlightened members of all evangelical churches. Deploring the injurious effects of schism—feeling more powerfully the welding influences of brotherly affection—pondering more carefully those passages which recommend love and unity—and reflecting on the great advantages of a united church, genuine Christians are at this moment longing to see eye to eye, and to co-operate as members of the same family in the work of the Lord. This commendable eagerness received embodiment in the Evangelical Alliance which was recently instituted under favourable auspices, and which bids fair to live and prosper till jarrings and contentions shall cease, and till those who call themselves Christians give unmistakeable evidences of their Christianity by living and acting as brethren. Whatever may be the term of its existence, let us be thankful for the indications of union it manifests, and let us join in that prayer our Lord breathed out for his disciples, “ That they all may be one ; as thou Father art in me and I in thee ; that they all may be one in us ; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.”

What encouragement do those promising signs afford to all engaged in the noble work of home evangelization! Two great hindrances to that angelic occupation are abounding deadness and abounding sectarianism. Now, in proportion as spirituality and unity increase, these hindrances decrease; in proportion as the members of piety burn and brighten, and saints draw closer together, these impediments lessen and disappear. In proportion, moreover, to the diminution and removal of these obstructions through the growing love and spirituality of the church, does that institute increase in fitness for fulfilling its mission, the conversion of the world—yes, proportionably as the church shakes off her drowsiness and dreaminess, and buries in oblivion her divisions and jealousies—proportionably as she arises and puts on her beautiful garments, does she advance in suitableness for spreading the truth all around, and advancing her holy sway. Let us, then, draw encouragement from her increasing strength and harmony, to bestir ourselves in sowing the incorruptible seed throughout the whole extent of home heathendom—let us be animated by her increasing healthfulness and vigour to labour assiduously and powerfully in the great work of saving souls, to which she is called, and for which she is daily becoming more and more qualified.

A third encouragement is, the present state of British missions.—The evangelization of our country was long comparatively neglected. It was not till the beginning of the present century that its spiritual destitution began to attract much attention. Isolated efforts were then made, both in England and in Scotland, particularly in the former, by the dissenting bodies, to spread

religion at home. Associations were established in various parts, for the diffusion of divine truth among the neglected masses by itinerant preaching, the instruction of the rising generation, and the distribution of tracts. At length, in 1820, the London Home Missionary Society was organized, whose object was to send out labourers to preach the gospel, to form Sabbath schools, and to distribute religious publications throughout the dark parts of the kingdom. A short time prior to the organization of this honoured society, Dr Chalmers, the great apostle of home missions, had been settled as the minister of St John's, Glasgow, and had commenced missionary operations in his parish. By his successful experiments, and his powerful advocacy, great interest was excited in the evangelization of the country, and many evangelistic associations established. During the long period of nearly thirty years, he devoted no small share of his time and strength to this great and good cause, and gave it an impulse which, now that he is removed, still helps to bear it onward. Through his potent instrumentality, and that of several enlightened compatriots, some of whom, along with himself, have been translated from their labours to their reward, British missions are beginning to assume a healthy appearance. A home, as well as a foreign, missionary spirit exists in many of the evangelical churches throughout the land. There are few orthodox congregations that are not more or less alive to the necessity of diffusing the gospel at home, and who are not making some endeavours, however inadequate, to meet the felt necessity. Several congregations have the whole ecclesiastical machinery erected, and in good working order, and are laudably striving who shall be most successful

in advancing the kingdom of our common Saviour. Associations, also, yea, individuals, are erecting churches and schools in destitute situations, and sending forth missionaries into various quarters to gather in stray sheep to the fold, and to make our nation Christian, not only in name, but in reality. Through the efforts thus being made, many neglected adults have been instructed in divine things, taught church-going habits, and changed, at least, in their external behaviour. From the last report of the "Home Missionary Association," we learn the following facts, which give us some idea of its activity:—It has an income of upwards of L.6,000; it employs 116 missionaries, and 100 lay-preachers, who have 41,000 hearers. Its chapels or preaching-rooms are 450, scattered amidst 440 towns, villages, and hamlets. Connected with these are 1,652 Sunday-school teachers, and 12,700 scholars. We likewise learn, from the last report of the "London City Mission," the following encouraging facts:—It has an income of L.20,320, and gives employment to 242 missionaries. During the year, its agents paid 1,018,436 visits; held 19,931 meetings for prayer and familiar exposition; distributed 1,197,953 tracts; prevailed on 2,803 adults to attend regularly on public worship; admitted, through the missionaries' instrumentality, 554 to the Lord's Supper; and instituted many ragged schools.

The subject of home missions is, at this moment, beginning to stir the public mind—many of the church courts throughout the land make them a matter of anxious and prayerful deliberation. The English Congregationalists, as appears from their "Year Book" for 1848, occupied a great part of their May sitting with

this important subject. Several ministers, according to a pre-arrangement, delivered suitable and powerful addresses ; and the meeting, besides the adoption of some practical measures, pledged itself to resume consideration of the whole subject at its next October assembly. All the courts of the Free Church have repeatedly had the evangelization of the masses under their consideration ; and it appears, from what transpired on the reading of the admirable report of “The Home Missionary and Church Extension Committee,” at last assembly, that the Free Church is yet to bestir herself more than ever in seeking the reclamation of our outcast and degraded fellow-subjects. The press, as well as the church, is awakening to the magnitude of the home missionary cause, and helping to increase that interest in its behalf which is already great, and evidently growing. It teems with appeals in favour of British missions, which are scattered in every direction, and read by tens of thousands.

These remarks show that home missions are beginning to wear a healthful, hopeful aspect. A large share of attention is, comparatively, bestowed upon them by all sects and all parties, while, wherever established, they are meeting with gratifying success. *They are no longer a novelty, but a fact; yea, a fact big with future promise.* All things betoken that they are firmly planted, and are destined, at no distant day, if adequately and perseveringly supported and prosecuted, to leaven the whole mass of our spiritually destitute countrymen with the gospel of peace. How cheering! how encouraging! Be animated by it, ye British Christians, to labour for God among your brethren according to the flesh, amidst every difficulty and every discouragement;

be animated by it to help forward that great work, which is *the* home-work of the day—a work on which the stability and prosperity of your country far more depend, than on all the measures of your greatest statesmen; and a work, too, which so nearly concerns the eternal welfare of those whom, next to your own relations, you should seek to bring to Jesus, and to prepare for that rest which awaits the people of God.

A fourth encouragement is, the promise and certainty of divine assistance.—In all evangelistic labour this is the crowning encouragement. We may erect churches, plant schools, circulate tracts, and send forth qualified agents, but without divine aid, this varied instrumentality will be utterly powerless. “Paul may plant and Apollos water, but God alone can give the increase.” “It is not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.” Nothing can effect a total change of heart and life, but God by the agency of the Sanctifier. The success, then, of all our efforts must entirely depend on divine help, which is freely promised, and which, if withheld, the blame must lie with ourselves. Says God, by his prophet, “I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring. And they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses.”* And says Christ, in his parting address to his disciples, “Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.” This promise, given by our Lord to the first preachers of the cross, and through them to their successors, and to all who should devote themselves to any department of usefulness, means that he would be

* Isa. xliv. 3, 4.

with them by his Spirit, counsel, and providence, directing them amidst their difficulties, supporting them amidst their trials, animating them amidst their dangers, and “ imparting to their otherwise powerless instructions, a converting, renovating, sanctifying efficacy, which must soon unstopp the ears of the spiritually deaf, unseale the eyes of the spiritually blind, burst asunder the gates of brass, and set the imprisoned spirits free—free to wander at large, and to regale themselves in new worlds of light, and life, and beauty, and joy.”* In fulfilment of this promise, the Holy Spirit was outpoured on the apostles, and the church greatly enlarged through their self-denying exertions. In fulfilment of the same promise, God mightily assisted Luther, and Knox, and Elliot, and Williams, and other devoted labourers who, in their day and generation, were so wondrously successful. Sometimes the Spirit has been sent forth along with the sustained endeavours of God’s people, “like a rushing mighty wind,” and sometimes “like the dew and the rain from heaven,” gradually softening the hard heart, and producing lasting impressions; and divine aid, through which clergymen and laymen have, in past ages, been enabled to achieve whatever good they were honoured to accomplish, may be obtained by every one, if rightly asked. For “every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth.” “If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth unto all men liberally, and upbraideth not.” Whatever we need is promised, and may be had in answer to fervent, believing, persevering prayer. If we are not straitened in ourselves, we are not straitened in God; so that, if we strive to do his work, looking up

* Dr Duff.

to him for assistance, he will give us all necessary aid ; he will give us grace to labour, grace to suffer, grace to conquer ; he will, in a word, give us his Spirit, who will abide in our hearts, and through whose omnipotency we will be enabled to travail in birth for souls joyfully and successfully.

O what encouragement is here ! Conversion, even in the most favourable circumstances, is an arduous work ; while the conversion of poor outcasts, like many by whom on every hand we are surrounded, is so difficult, as by some to be thought impossible. But we would ask, Is any thing too hard for the Lord ? Assuredly not. With God all things are possible ; nay, with him, all things are alike easy ; before him all difficulties evanish. “Who art thou, O great mountain before Zerubbabel, thou shalt become a plain.”* He can as easily convert a Manasseh, a Zaccheus, a Barabbas, and a Bunyan, as those who are distinguished for amiability and outward moral propriety. Moreover, he is as willing as he is able, yea, he is waiting to be gracious to the greatest sinners that tread the face of the earth. And he who can easily convert the most hardened, making them monuments of his grace, will be with us if we call upon him, when we speak to those who are dull of hearing, and who are rioting and revelling amidst impurities and abominable idolatries. Yes, he will be with us by his Spirit, if we earnestly strive, in dependence upon his might, to save souls from death, making even the weak as David ; so that we may confidently expect that our labour in the Lord will not be altogether in vain. Be this our encouragement to enter the darkest alley, and the lowest hovel, in seeking

* Zech. iv. 7.

to save the lost ; and let us be more earnest in prayer than ever for help from above. Let us constantly be addressing our heavenly Father in the language of the Church, “ Awake ! awake ! put on strength, O arm of the Lord ; awake as in the ancient of days, in the generations of old ; art thou not it that hath cut Rahab and wounded the dragon ?” “ Where is thy strength, the sounding of thy bowels, and thy mercies ?”*

* Isa. li. 9; lxiii. 15.

CHAPTER VIII.

GENERAL RELIGIOUS MOTIVES.

“He that winneth souls is wise.”—PROV. xi. 30.

MOTIVES and encouragements are closely allied. Both act as persuasives, or stimulants, although the former may be better fitted for moving one class, the latter, another class of persons. When, therefore, an arduous work has to be performed, that requires the labour of a great number of different persons of diverse temperaments, no incentive should be withheld. Now, as the conversion of the home heathen is a work of this sort, every inducement which is fitted to encourage the weak, to animate the strong, and to stimulate all to engage in it, should be stated, illustrated, and enforced. It is for this reason that, to the encouragements already enumerated, we are led to give in detail the various motives that should constrain Christians to engage in home missionary effort.

These motives may be properly and advantageously divided into three great classes. The first may be called general religious motives, being nearly alike applicable to home and foreign missionary enterprise. The second may be termed particular religious motives, being those of a Christian kind which are more directly applicable to home missions. The third may be denominated secular motives, being those of a social and

economic nature, which enforce the christianization of Britain. Each of these classes, in the order now mentioned, shall be considered in this and the two subsequent chapters.

The first general motive of a religious nature that enforces home evangelization, is a regard to the glory of God.—His essential glory, or that which arises from his adorable perfections, and which is inherent in his nature, is incapable of addition. As well might we endeavour to increase the radiance of the meridian sun by a host of burning tapers, as to add one iota to the innate splendour of the divine attributes. God's *declarative* glory, however, or that which arises from the manifestation of himself to the celestial and terrestrial universe, through the conversion of sinners and the obedience and praises of believers, may be greatly increased. In illustration of this statement we remark, that the divine perfections are manifested or made known to the human race through creation, providence, and redemption; but chiefly through the last, the most glorious of Jehovah's works. It is in the great work of redemption that God's moral attributes exhibit the greatest harmony and lustre. It is here that his wisdom, mercy, and justice are harmoniously and gloriously displayed, that his character shines forth in adorable loveliness and attractiveness. At first, we are apt to think that Christ's redemptive work was intended exclusively for the benefit of mankind; but this is alike selfish and unscriptural, as our salvation was but its secondary and subordinate object: the first being the glory of our heavenly Father, who ruleth over all, for whose glory every thing was made, and who will be glorified one way or other in all his works, and by all

his creatures. These things being so, is it not to be inferred that God's glory, the primary end of our Lord's mission, must be promoted by the advancement of its secondary end, the salvation of the lost? What appears a legitimate inference, is capable of easy demonstration. God's glory is promoted by the manifestation of himself to his creatures. Now, in every conversion, his holiness, justice, and mercy are strikingly made known to the person converted. Every individual who is brought to a saving knowledge of the truth, beholds the glorious character of God in the face of Jesus Christ, and perceives that he is worthy of being loved, feared, and obeyed. Hence, in what proportion sinners are converted, in that very same proportion are God's perfections manifested to them; so that conversion and the divine glory are inseparably connected. Moreover, the repentance of the wicked, along with their adoption into the divine family, is likewise glorifying to their heavenly Father, inasmuch as it secures to him their love and obedience. Besides perceiving the loveliness of Jehovah's character, converts feel his claims to their affection, homage, and service, and love and honour and serve him accordingly. They choose him for their God, regard him as their best friend, delight in his statutes, hymn his praises, and live for the honour of his name. Turning away from sin, which insults him to his face, and dedicating themselves to his service, they in some measure live to his praise and glory. The rest of mankind, those who are living in their natural state, are throwing contempt on the divine perfections, and dishonouring the divine majesty; but those who are justified and regenerated, and who die unto sin and live unto righteousness, show forth the

honour of God's name, and live to the praise of the glory of his grace.

God's glory being thus promoted by the repentance of sinners and their subsequent life, ought not Christians to seek its promotion by endeavouring to bring perishing mortals to the foot of the cross? Undoubtedly; as they should be principally jealous of the divine glory, and should live and labour for its advancement. If children are interested in their father's honour, how much more should God's children be interested in his! Let all, then, who profess to be living for God, show their regard for his glory by making known his saving health among all nations, not forgetting the country that gave them birth, and in which they reside. Remember, ye people of the Lord, that nothing within the bounds of the universe can be compared with the glory of its great Creator, that God has intrusted you with its vindication and promotion, and that your whole soul and strength should be put forth in its behalf. Be not, therefore, indifferent regarding it. Testify for God, awake to a sense of your high destiny, and proclaim through every channel the glad news of salvation to all your erring brethren, that the number of the divine family may be increased, and the divine glory correspondingly augmented.

A second general motive which should constrain us who believe to make known the gospel to our countrymen, is that intense gratitude we owe to the Lord Jesus Christ for what he has done, is doing, and will yet do for us.—We came into this world guilty and ruined creatures, lost to the great end of our creation, and to all happiness, liable to be cast into the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone; and, had we died in our natural state,

we would at this moment, along with the rich man and myriads of doomed souls, have been lifting up our eyes in hell, being in torments. But Emanuel, by his obedience unto death, opened up a way consistently with the claims of divine justice, by which our sins might be pardoned, and the law magnified, in our deliverance from condemnation. Moreover, in his own good time he arrested us by his grace in our sinful career, enlightened our minds in the knowledge of divine things, created us anew after the divine image, inspired us with the feelings and dispositions of children, sealed us by his Holy Spirit, and filled our mouths with songs of rejoicing. Nay, more, he pities, intercedes, and provides for us; carries forward, amidst great opposition, the good work he has begun in our souls; renders us victorious over all our enemies, and makes all things work together for our spiritual and eternal good; and he will love us for ever, delivering us from the power of death and the grave, and translating us, at last, to mansions of transporting and unfading bliss, where we shall enjoy happiness large as our wishes, and lasting as eternity.

When we meditate on these things—when we consider that Christ suffered and died for our offences, and brought us out of darkness into the marvellous light of the gospel, and waits to receive us into his heavenly kingdom—ought we not to be filled with deep and adoring gratitude? And how are we to give expression to our grateful feelings? By praising his goodness, and by consecrating ourselves to his service; striving, in every possible way, to please and honour him in all things. Filled with gratitude for redeeming love and justifying grace, we should indeed exclaim, “O Lord,

I am thy servant ; I am thy servant ; thou hast loosed my bonds." "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do ?" Yes, our gratitude should find vent in seeking to know his will, and in doing it cheerfully and constantly, that his name may be magnified. Now, he willeth that all should hear of his atoning death, and be saved by believing on him ; and he enjoins you, my Christian readers, and all who have been benefited by his death, to make known his finished work to mankind at large. Show, then, your gratitude to him, by endeavouring to make all men—especially your ignorant fellow-subjects—acquainted with his salvation ; that, through him, they may be rescued from the second death, made as happy in the present world as you are yourselves, and prepared for the same happiness in the world beyond. This is an appropriate way of expressing your gratitude to Him who shed for you his precious blood, and called you to participate in his redemption ; as, besides being an act of homage to his authority, it seeks to advance his honour, by carrying out his gracious designs to the perishing. What more natural for an overflowing heart than to do what is possible for pleasing and exalting a generous benefactor ? Let your gratitude, therefore, flow in the channel of missionary effort. Let your souls bless your Saviour for all his gracious benefits, by living and labouring to increase his joy, and to promote his mediatorial honour, through the conversion of sinners. Away with every thing like coldness and ingratitude, which are so unbecoming and so hurtful. "Only fear the Lord, and serve him in truth with your whole heart ; for consider how great things he has done for you." Consecrate your time, your influence, your property, and all you have, to his service ; that you may

give expression to your gratitude, and hasten forward the time when the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ.

A third motive is, compassion for the present pitiable condition and impending doom of the ungodly.—Whatever opinion the wicked may entertain of themselves, they are poor, and wretched, and miserable. Alienated from God, at enmity with him, and exposed to his direst vengeance, they must be any thing but happy and comfortable. As Scripture and observation conjoin in teaching, they are troubled and disquieted, seeking happiness without being able to find it. Yea, they fight against their own peace and comfort, and not unfrequently subject themselves to great wretchedness and misery. Ignorant of their real state, and careless about their salvation, they too frequently turn a deaf ear to every warning and exhortation, and give an unbridled rein to their own lusts and passions. The consequence is, they often persist in their evil courses till they sink into the lowest depth of moral degradation, become affrighted at their own shadow, and seek in vain for undisturbed repose. Does not their present condition, then, call for deep commiseration ? They are ignorantly and determinedly depriving themselves of real happiness, subjecting themselves to pains and penalties innumerable, and surely they deserve the sincere sympathy of all who know the source of their unhappiness, and who have obtained divine comfort and tranquillity. Ought not you, then, my dear readers, who have been favoured with gospel peace, to put on, in imitation of Christ, bowels of mercies, and to sympathize with your erring, unenlightened brethren, who are recklessly treading the path of sorrow, and walking

amidst perpetual gloom? And if you do feel as you should for their distresses, how can you rightly manifest your feeling but by seeking to leaven them with the gospel, which alone can dry up their tears, heal their sorrows, and restore them to themselves?

While the present distressing condition of the ungodly should draw forth your pity in efforts for their spiritual good, it is their impending doom that should especially enlist your active compassion in their behalf. Born in a sinful state, and persisting in the commission of sin, they stand exposed to its penalty—final perdition. And what language can express, or what imagination conceive, the fearful nature of this penalty? It includes a punishment of loss, and a punishment of sense; or exclusion from inconceivable, unending bliss, and consignment to endless, unbearable misery. Those who die in their ungodliness shall be eternally excluded from the ennobling, enrapturing felicity of the upper sanctuary—from those enduring joys that are alike incomprehensible and inexpressible. But, alas! this will be but the negative part of their awful doom; as they will be consigned to the place of darkness and despair, prepared for the devil and his angels, where they shall gnaw their tongues and gnash their teeth, seeking death without being able to find it. And all this unendurable agony will be everlasting! Once cast into outer darkness and quenchless flames, they will be chained there throughout eternal ages. Never will their woes be either mitigated or terminated. Here, the longest night of pain, however sharp, will come to an end—bringing, it may be, relief, and speaking of hope; but the duration of hell-torments will be interminable. After suffering for myriads of myriads of ages, lost souls will still see

no prospect of escape, and will still be compelled to exclaim, This is but an atom of our misery. Now, recollect, it is to this deprivation of happiness, and to this state of unmixed everlasting suffering and despair, that all the wicked stand exposed. This is the doom which hangs, as a dark cloud, over their heads. To this they are hastening; and by this they will, unless enlightened and converted, be overtaken. Are not they, therefore, objects of the deepest compassion? Can you think of their impending, overwhelming destruction, without sincerely pitying them? If you saw a man standing beside a tottering edifice, that was ready to fall upon him, or enclosed within a building that the devouring flames had wholly encompassed, or proceeding blindfold to some yawning pit, would not your bowels of compassion be moved? Undoubtedly they would, if you deserved the appellation of men. And, oh! if you would pity those who were exposed to some appalling temporal death, how much more should you, my Christian readers, who know something of the value of the soul, and the ransom paid for its redemption, compassionate those who are rushing headlong to the untold miseries of the second death? These, above all others, you should tenderly commiserate, displaying your pity for them as you would for those whose natural life was endangered, by exerting yourselves to save them. Let your compassion, therefore, flow out in timely, efficacious help. Instead of allowing it to evaporate in tears and sighs and wishes, let it come forth in comprehensive practical measures for the benefit of perishing sinners. Let it prompt you to labour with all diligence and earnestness for the conversion of the heathen at home and abroad; let it constrain you to tell the

thoughtless beings, on your right hand and on your left, of the great things Christ has done for them, and of the necessity of their betaking themselves to him now, that they may escape coming wrath, and be made partakers of eternal blessedness.

Feeling for all the ungodly, and bent on their salvation, should you not especially compassionate and assist your own fellow-subjects, your own neighbours, and, it may be, your own kindred, who are rejecting the Saviour, and destroying themselves ! Oh ! can you see your countrymen, your companions, and possibly your kinsmen, bone of your bone, and flesh of your flesh, living under the frown of Jehovah, and exposed to his vengeance, without pitying them, and bestirring yourselves for their welfare,—without making strenuous efforts to save them from irremediable, everlasting destruction ? Surely you cannot. We beseech you, then, at the bidding of Christian compassion, to labour for the conversion of those with whom you are connected by the ties of country, of neighbourhood, of friendship, and perhaps of relationship. The example of the most eminent saints conspires in enforcing this entreaty, in animating you to pity and help perishing mortals, to whom you are united by the bonds of society and endearment. On discovering the gross idolatry of the Israelites, Moses was so grieved, and so set on having them rescued and saved, that he exclaimed, in an agony of earnestness, “ Oh, this people have sinned a great sin ! Yet now forgive their sin, and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book.” On beholding the Jews of his time going into captivity for their sins, Jeremiah cried out, compassionately, “ Give glory to God before he cause darkness, and before your feet

stumble on the dark mountains. But if ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride, and mine eyes shall weep sore, and run down with tears, because the Lord's flock is carried away captive." Well aware that a large portion of the Jewish nation were rejecting the gospel to their own destruction, Paul so sincerely compassionated them, that he was willing to endure any privation, and to make any lawful sacrifice, if he could but be instrumental in benefiting and saving them. This is his meaning when, consumed with zeal, he declares, "I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh." O let the example of these illustrious patriots stir the depths of your sympathy, and fire you with Christian patriotism. Sympathise with your godless fellow-subjects, weep in secret at the thought of their impending doom, and labour in season and out of season to bring them to repentance, that they may escape in the day of God's fierce wrath, and have an abundant entrance administered into the New Jerusalem.

A fourth general motive is our own spiritual wellbeing. —Growth in grace is so highly desirable, that it should in every possible way be promoted. Forward should be our motto, forward our untiring aim. Now, to make spiritual progress, to increase in holiness, and its invincible attendant happiness, we must be attentive to two things, retirement and active duty.

To enjoy soul-prosperity we must carefully attend to the secret duties of religion. Unless we read, and meditate, and commune in secret with our heavenly Father, we will become languid, profitless professors, whose vitality will be as dubious to ourselves as to

others. There is no lively piety that is not daily watered with prayer and meditation—no lamp burning brightly that is not often trimmed at the altar of devotion.

But our spiritual improvement is also greatly dependent on the use we make of our gifts and graces. If our religion is of the selfish order, if we receive grace without seeking to dispense it to others, then God will withhold the blessing, and our spirituality will decline. “There is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty.” An impoverished soul is the invariable result of spiritual selfishness. If, however, we liberally dispense what God has freely bestowed upon us, we fit ourselves by so acting for the reception of more grace, and draw down that divine blessing which maketh spiritually rich. By trying to benefit others, our own knowledge, consolation, and experience are increased, and our own spiritual supplies multiplied. It is God’s unalterable appointment that we receive in the path of duty. “The liberal soul shall be made fat, and he that watereth others shall be watered also himself.” This is a uniform law in the kingdom of grace—a law which operates with as great regularity as does any one of the laws in the physical world. He who helps his neighbour, no less truly helps himself—he who imparts to others, waters and fructifies his own soul.

Of this great truth, the history of all eminent saints is confirmatory. Paul was an advanced Christian; but would his spiritual attainments have been equally great had he shut himself up in some secluded retreat, instead of preaching, amidst perils innumerable, the unsearchable riches of Christ, throughout the wide extent of the Roman empire? Baxter and Brainerd were giants in

spirituality; but would they have reached their gigantic stature had they, instead of being in labours abundant, betaken themselves to some monastic establishment, and spent their days in prayer and meditation? This cannot be supposed. In blessing others, God blessed them, making their souls fat, and enriching them with all the treasures of his grace. And so has it invariably happened, and so will it ever be. Many now working hard in the vineyard can declare, as a matter of experience, that they have learned, and received, and enjoyed, more than can well be expressed, in giving instruction, warning, and consolation to others. Think of this, ye who love the Saviour, and pant after a higher degree of perfection. Bear in mind, religion thrives best in the field of Christian exertion, amidst toils, and labours, and sufferings, not in cloisters and hermitages. If, therefore, you are desirous to have your souls fat and flourishing, and exposed to all the enriching dews of heaven, you must, as you have received the gift, be ministering to the necessities of your neglected brethren. Like the clouds, pour out your waters on the parched earth, thus fulfilling your mission to the world, and God himself shall replenish you out of the ocean of his Son's infinite fulness. Live for Christ, and your conformity to his image will grow; be fruitful in every good work, and you will become rich in Christian experience; distribute, and you will receive; comfort, and you will be comforted; feed others, and you will be fed yourselves, and nourished up to everlasting life.

A fifth powerful motive is, anxiety to escape the punishment with which the neglect of souls will be visited.—God has redeemed and sanctified his people, that they may be his witnesses and heralds, that they may display a

banner because of the truth, and may go every where preaching the word. One reason why he does not immediately call them to heaven is, that they may, under his Spirit, carry forward his gracious designs on earth ; that they may be instrumental in bringing others to a knowledge of the truth, and in hastening the Messiah's reign. And it is not optional with them, whether they shall or shall not take part in this mighty work, as they are imperatively enjoined to watch for souls, and solemnly warned that God will hold them answerable for any neglect. What was originally addressed to Ezekiel, though more directly applicable to the watchmen on Zion's towers, applies to every professing Christian. It is this : “ Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel ; therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. When I say unto the wicked, thou shalt surely die ; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way to save his life, the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thine hand.”* Christians, therefore, who are neglectful of the souls of their perishing brethren, will have to answer to the God of heaven and earth for their blood, if they shall die in their iniquity. Meditate, ye followers of Jesus, on this alarming subject; think of the sin, the punishment, and the justice of the punishment, that peradventure you may be stimulated so to act as to save yourselves from blood-guiltiness.

Let us cursorily glance at the sin itself. What is it to neglect souls? As appears from the quotation just made, such of you, my readers, as know the truth, are guilty of this neglect, if you do not, as you have ability

* Ezek. iii. 17, 18.

and opportunity, plainly, faithfully, and perseveringly warn the ungodly of their sin and danger. It will not free you from the blood of souls to give a small contribution now and then for their conversion, or occasionally to speak to this one or that other one about the way of salvation. Such inadequate efforts as these will not free you from the guilt of those that die in their iniquity. No ; you will be held guilty unless you do all that you can—unless you task your strength and ingenuity to the utmost to save your erring brethren. In so far as your exertions fall short of what they might and should have been, to that extent you are blameworthy and punishable. *The degree of your negligence constitutes the degree of your guilt.* One opportunity either totally neglected or improperly improved—one poor mortal left uninstructed and unwarned that your efforts might have reached, brings you in guilty of the blood of immortal souls, that were formed after the divine image, and that are capable of endless, ecstatic bliss, or of unending, unbearable wo. To be guilty, then, in this respect, is far from being a trifling matter. It is to be guilty of a sin of the deepest dye, as nothing can be given in exchange for the soul.

As might therefore be expected, this sin will be heavily punished ; God will require the blood of ruined souls at the hands of those through whose neglect they perished. He will hold them answerable, and will punish them in righteousness. We do not mean that all who are in any measure remiss will be punished with everlasting destruction, as we might then truly ask who shall be saved ? No ; but we mean that all habitually unfaithful ministers, and masters, and parents, and others who occupy places of trust, to the great detri-

ment of souls, will, by their unfaithfulness, aggravate their own eternal punishment ; and also that believers of every grade who do not warn the ungodly with diligence and fidelity, doing what they can to bring them to repentance, subject themselves to their Father's displeasure, expose themselves to temporal judgment, retard their spiritual improvement, and lay up for themselves elements of confusion and terror. Though through the merits of their Redeemer they shall escape eternal condemnation, yet God will in some way chastise them during their earthly sojourn, while in the day of judgment he will ask them before an assembled world for those souls who may have perished through their neglect, and will assign them a lower place in heaven than he would otherwise have done. Even though assured in the day of judgment of eternal felicity, what will be their looks, their feelings, their groanings of spirit, when, amidst the mingled terrors and splendours of the great assize, they catch the piercing eye of the Judge, and listen to the fearful question, Where are your children, your friends, your neighbours, whom I commanded you to instruct and warn ? Dread as that requisition will be, its frightfulness and their dismay will be augmented by the shrieks and curses of those whose ruin they might, by timely, faithful warning, have prevented. These considerations contain the elements of incomprehensible anguish to all the unfaithful stewards of the mysteries of redemption.

And is not God righteous, who taketh vengeance ? Give heed to this, ye who have found rest in the bosom of the Saviour. You know that the loss of the soul is equally great and irreparable—you are commanded by Him who bled and died for you, to give yourselves to

the dignified but laborious work of saving sinners—you are gratefully bound by your distinguishing mercies, and by the promises of divine aid, to seek the salvation of the perishing ; and hence, if, through your spiritual indolence, hell is peopled with victims who might have rejoiced in heaven, you cannot think it unreasonable for God to demand from you reparation, and to make you in some way feel, and that intensely, your awful neglect. Should not this awaken you to thoughtful reflection ? Should it not make you tremblingly alive to your responsibility ? Should it not constrain you individually to ask, Am I really so engaged labouring for souls, as to escape the frowns and chastisements of my God and Saviour ? What does your conscience say, what does your conduct say, to this awakening, this alarming question ? Are you working at all ? Are you making any thing like adequate efforts to arouse sleepy and sin-laden souls ? Are you attempting in right earnest to do what you can ? *Oh, if you are standing idle, or if you are doing little, yea, if you are not labouring like men who are accountable, you have reason to be humbled, abashed, and dismayed.* THE SLEEP OF DEATH AND THE THOUGHT OF JUDGMENT “ WILL BE DREADFUL TO THAT SPIRIT WHO BEARS ON ITS SKIRTS IN THE UNSEEN WORLD THE BLOOD OF NEGLECTED SOULS.”

The last general motire we shall mention is, the inconceivably great reward that shall be conferred on those who are instrumental in saving sinners.—Believers, we are fully aware, can do nothing worthy of being rewarded. Do what they may, either in working out their own salvation, or in helping to save others, they know and confess themselves to be unprofitable servants. Not to their own labours and sacrifices, however praiseworthy,

but to the finished work of Emanuel, do they look for acceptance with God and eternal life. Their heavenly Father, however, has been pleased to reveal that all their good deeds shall meet with his approbation and recompence. In the volume of inspiration we are told that our labour in the Lord will not be in vain—that the works of those who die in the Lord will follow them—that he who winneth souls is wise, and that those who in this respect are wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they who turn many to righteousness, as the stars, for ever and ever. Nothing, therefore, Christians, that you do for your Saviour, no exertions you make in his cause, no hardened sinners you convince and convert, no feeble souls you strengthen, no mourning penitents you comfort, will be overlooked, forgotten, or unrewarded. Whatever good works you perform will be graciously reckoned to your own account, and will serve to heighten your undying joy, and to brighten your unfading crown. “Every man shall receive his own reward, according to his own labour.” “He who soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly, and he who soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.” “One star differeth from another star in glory.” According as you labour in the repression of wickedness, and in the promotion of holiness, will be your station, felicity, and glory in the upper sanctuary. The lowest place in heaven towers far above the highest place on earth; the least reward in our Father’s house is fraught with inconceivable exaltation and enjoyment; and yet it is given to the followers of Jesus to gain an exceeding great reward, to win a seat near the throne, to occupy a distinguished place among kings and priests, to quaff living water at its very foun-

tain, and oh! shall you not be fired with a holy ambition to rank high among the shining throng, and to imbibe the largest draughts of bliss ineffable! Moses, in working for God, had respect to the recompense of reward; and even Jesus, in completing his great atoning work, kept his eye on the joy that was set before him, and therefore you may look to the promised remuneration as a lawful stimulus to the right employment of your talents. Labour, then, for Christ with an eye to eternity, embrace every opportunity of serving him, bring your whole soul and strength to his ennobling, remunerative employment, that you may stand high in his estimation here, and may be exalted to the highest honours among the redeemed in the realms above, where joys never end and never pall.

CHAPTER IX.

PARTICULAR RELIGIOUS MOTIVES.

“Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.”—PHIL. ii. 4.

HAVING glanced at several of the more general motives that should animate believers to devote themselves to the work of the Lord throughout the world at large, we now proceed to consider a few of those religious inducements which bear more directly on home missions.

And, first, the present is an age of transition, and therefore an age on which the future is greatly dependent.—Never since time began was the entire order of things in such a changeful state as at this moment; never was there such a mental awakening, and, consequently, such a restlessness and desire for change as now. The whole world is upheaving—dissatisfaction with what is, and expectation of something better, widely prevails. In a word, transition is every where predominant and visible. He is blind who sees it not; it is penetrating oriental territories, from which its very shadow was excluded by the massy barriers of usage, statute, and superstition; it is treading the Italian soil, from which its spirit was expelled, and from which it was debarred by the highest civil and ecclesiastical authorities; it is marching through the length and breadth of the

European continent, which despotism and a crafty religion have long unitedly laboured to shut against it. Transition, which stalks abroad, awaking the ire of pagan and popish priests, chasing monarchs from their thrones, and calling forth the energies of the multitude, treads with no slow and uncertain step this highly-favoured kingdom. Look where we will among ourselves, we behold its onward march, and its resistless operations. Great influences are every where at work in our land, changing, though not with the cry and the crash of foreign innovation, yet surely and infallibly, the very framework of British society. Knowledge is enlarging its boundaries, every department of science is cultivated assiduously and successfully, and nothing is left unexplored and uninvestigated. And then, too, knowledge is not now, as of old, confined to a few, but is widely diffused, though not so extensively as it ought to be, and will soon be. Mind, at all events, is awakened, curiosity is excited, inquiry is abroad. This mental awakening has produced, and is producing, great changes. It has increased the power of the people, led them personally to canvass both religion and politics, and raised their expectations to an unwonted pitch. These are momentous changes, which, along with the spirit of the times, the rapidity of locomotion, and various modern improvements, are working other changes that few have almost as yet begun to contemplate. Indeed, the hand of change is every where at work within the realm, and every where perceptible. Laws, institutions, customs, rights, are in a transition state. Much, therefore, must depend on the nature of the change they undergo; much must depend on the form they receive. It will doubtless give a stamp to national character and

tastes, which will long exert a mighty influence, either for good or for evil. According to the changes now being effected, must this land be for generations to come. If they are moulded and pervaded by Christianity, their healthful, invigorating influences will be felt for ages, elevating and adorning the nation ; but if of an opposite character, they may produce deteriorating effects that shall never be counteracted. How highly important, then, that our national mutation be rightly guided and directed ! how highly important that every change be so seasoned with the gospel as to issue in lasting good ! And how can this be effected ? Only by spreading the gospel in every direction, only by evangelizing the nation wholly, and thus giving a wholesome direction to literature and legislation, and the onward movements of society. Let us keep this in mind, and act accordingly ; let us remember that the present is big with the future, and that every thing, under God, depends on what we do at this very moment. A year's neglect now is perilous ; twenty years' neglect is ruinous. The future depends on us. Let us, therefore, live for futurity. Posterity depends on us. Let us, therefore, seek to have their blessing, and not their curse. *This is the crisis of Britain's weal or wo.* Let us realize the responsibility of our situation, and let us come to the help of the Lord against the mighty, that our fatherland may enjoy the smile of heaven, and be famous among the nations of the earth, not only for intelligence and military prowess, but also for morality and religion.

2dly, Home evangelization would be promotive of union and of a revival of religion throughout the churches.— Union is highly desirable ; and all the truly pious of every

denomination throughout every part of the kingdom are longing and praying for it. Now, the Christianization of the masses would tell beneficially on this object. To a certain extent, all sects could co-operate in this heavenly work. They could conjointly deliberate about the best means of evangelizing the land, and could, even for some departments at least of the requisite labour, employ the same agents. If certain members of different persuasions might object to the employment of the same missionaries, they might surely employ the same teachers, and could, at all events, facilitate one another's labours. Co-operation in such a noble work, although not at first so full as could be desired, would draw the various denominations together, and would lead to the interchange of friendly sentiments, and the cultivation of friendly intercourse. Meeting, deliberating, praying, and working together, they would look with a charitable eye on one another's differences, put the best construction on one another's actions, and learn to love one another. Common occupation would beget brotherly feeling and brotherly harmony, and would pour oil on the troubled waters of strife and separation. It is chiefly, I think, owing to the want of some common, practical object, that the Evangelical Alliance is not so successful as it deserves to be. Were it to form itself into a great home mission, and to send its evangelists right and left, I have little doubt but that it would fan the flame of love with tenfold more effect than it is doing, and obtain that support to which, in our opinion, it is entitled, and which I should like to see it receiving. Joint effort, along with its many accompaniments, could not fail to draw all hearts close together, and to prepare

eventually for seeing eye to eye, and for full incorporation.

Besides promoting union among the different British churches, home evangelization would also revive them, and brace them with new energy. Notwithstanding of the apparent symptoms of revival that are discernible, and which we gladly hail, yet lifelessness and barrenness largely abound, marring the beauty, and impairing the usefulness, of every sect. And what must be done for removing them, and for sending a new stream of spiritual life throughout every denomination? Among other things which might be specified, evangelization is one which would exert a reviving influence among all the churches. If the church of Christ took a lofty view of her position, and set herself to the cultivation of the whole land, casting herself, in simple dependence upon the Lord, and going forward in his strength to the angelic undertaking, she might expect to obtain what she needs and desires—increased vitality. “To pursue health for its own sake, is usually found rather a sorry mode of becoming strong; far better follow some active and bracing employment, the exertion needed for which will circulate stagnant blood, and restore a healthful bloom to the cheek. Perhaps it may be found in the same way that to seek a revival of spiritual life directly for its own sake, may not be so effectual a method of securing it, as to address ourselves in right earnest to some great spiritual undertaking, in straining and praying for ability to accomplish which, the life which we need may be sent gushing through our veins.”*

In confirmation of what we are proving and illustrat-

* *Free Church Magazine*, September 1849.

ing, it may be mentioned, that foreign missionary enterprise revived the piety and increased the comfort of those churches who first espoused it. "There was a period of my ministry," said the devoted Andrew Fuller to a friend, "marked by the most pointed systematic effort to comfort my serious people, but the more I tried to comfort them, the more they complained of doubts and darkness. I knew not what to do nor what to think, for I had done my best to comfort the mourners in Zion. At this time it pleased God to direct my attention to the claims of the perishing heathen in India. I felt we had been living for ourselves, and not caring for their souls. I spoke as I felt. My serious people wondered, and wept over their past inattention to the subject. They began to talk about a Baptist mission. The females, especially, began to collect money for the spread of the gospel. We met and prayed for the heathen; met and considered what could be done amongst ourselves for them; met and did what we could; and while all this was going on, the lamentation ceased. The sad became cheerful, and the desponding calm. No one complained of a want of comfort, and I, instead of having to study how to comfort my flock, was myself comforted by them. They were drawn out of themselves. Sir, that was the real secret. God blessed them while they tried to be a blessing."

Might not home missions be expected to have as precious a reflex influence as foreign missions? If the piety of the church was enlivened, and her happiness increased by sending missionaries to Asia and Africa, would not the same desirable results be produced by sending missionaries to the neglected lanes and streets of our fatherland, where multitudes are perishing for

lack of knowledge, going down to the silent grave, and hastening to the approaching judgment, unpardoned, unprepared? This might be reasonably expected; and hence, as real Christians value the spirituality of the church, with which their own spiritual well-being is so intimately connected, they should be stimulated to go out to the highways and hedges, to the abodes of the most worthless and most wretched, leaving nothing undone to compel them to come in.

3dly, Home missions would be promotive of foreign missions.—The gospel is adapted to, and designed for, the whole human family; and it is at once our bounden duty and our high privilege to endeavour to bring the inhabitants of every country and clime to the foot of the cross. We are sadly lacking in obedience, gratitude, and holy ambition, if we are not zealously striving to hasten onward the bright predicted period, when “the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and when all nations shall flow unto it.” Now, by diffusing the gospel among the home heathen, we indirectly help to diffuse it throughout the dark and dreary domain of heathendom at large, as the following observations will illustrate.

The conversion of the godless among ourselves obviously augments the aggregate of British Christians. In proportion as this augmentation proceeds, existing churches are thronged, and new churches erected and filled. Moreover, home-missionary efforts serve to promote the unity, and to enliven the piety, of those who engage in them, so that the enlargement and spirituality of the church go hand in hand. In benefiting others she benefits herself; in blessing she is blessed and pros-

pered. Conducting to the enlargement and revival of the church, home evangelization would obviously prepare her for greater usefulness abroad, as it would alike augment the number and increase the liberality of her contributors, and consequently the sum total of her contributions. In this way, the cause of foreign missions would be greatly benefited by home operations, as far larger funds are needed to evangelize distant lands than are at present at the disposal of missionary societies. The gospel machinery erected on the European continent, and on the Asiatic and African shores, is altogether unworthy of the British churches, and totally inadequate for levelling the gigantic erections of popery, infidelity, and idolatry, and its inadequacy is principally attributable to the want of pecuniary resources. An enlarged exchequer would therefore assist in destroying the kingdom of Satan, and in advancing the kingdom of the Messiah. Qualified labourers for the foreign field are sometimes, we know, as difficult to be procured as their means of support; but the revival which home missions would originate might be expected in a great measure to furnish these. In a word, an extended, enlivened, devoted church, would provide both additional agents and additional funds, and would thus forward the great cause, which lies so near the heart of Jesus, and all his genuine disciples—the conversion of the world.

Home evangelization, then, it appears, would tell beneficially on foreign evangelization; and this of itself should be a strong incentive to us to evangelize our benighted brethren, especially when we consider how much the christianization of the world depends on this country. “The root of the missionary vine,

whose branches have already stretched over so many lands, and which must one day envelop our globe, is planted in England. It consists of the home churches ; and it requires and demands an immense annual augmentation of sustenance and nourishment, without which its extending boughs in foreign climes must speedily wither, and ultimately die. The cause of our home population is, therefore, in the highest sense, the cause of the heathen ; and he who does most to promote the salvation of his country, is the best benefactor of missions to the gentiles. Whatever leads to the establishment of new churches, or the increase of small churches, or the revival of slumbering churches, is a primary step to the conversion of the world.”*

There is another way in which home revival and enlargement would act favourably on foreign parts—viz. through the medium of emigration. Tens of thousands are annually emigrating from Great Britain to the different quarters of the world, many of whom go to Pagan and Popish lands, or, at all events, to places destitute of religious ordinances. Now, if these emigrants, instead of being, as at present, largely composed of infidels, Romanists, and indifferentists, consisted wholly, or in a large proportion, of enlightened, devoted Christians, they might both keep religion alive among themselves, till provision was made for a stated ministry, and also act the part of missionaries to those among whom they were located, proving a blessing, and not a curse, to the land of their adoption. Thus acted the Plymouth pilgrims and other pious European emigrants, who at an early period of American colonization, gave an impulse to religion in the Western Hemisphere,

* Jethro, p. 2.

which is being felt at this date, and which will be felt till the end of time. These godly settlers maintained divine worship among themselves, and exerted a favourable influence upon the worldlings by whom they were surrounded, and with whom they had occasionally to associate. Pious men who change their homes and settle down in foreign parts, destitute of the means of grace, will always act similarly, and therefore church extension in Britain, now that the tide of emigration is flowing so deep and so rapid, would tell beneficially on idolatrous lands. Every vessel that left our ports crowded with emigrants, would bear to remote regions not a few whose every settlement would be a sanctuary, and whose great aim would be to spread the Christian religion among their neighbours, and to forward the high and holy work God has given us all to do.

Home missions, then, are not, as some erroneously suppose, antagonist to foreign missions, but, on the very contrary, auxiliary to them, and necessary to their adequate support. Whatever is done to extend Christianity at home, furthers its extension abroad; whatever is gained to the gospel cause in Britain, is so much gained to the same noble cause in distant climes. Every home missionary is in reality a foreign missionary; he multiplies converts in his own country, who assist, both directly and indirectly, in multiplying converts in every other country. What a matter of rejoicing is this, and what a powerful motive, among others, for constraining us to evangelize our neglected neighbours and fellow-countrymen, and thus to hasten onward the time when “the heathen shall be given to Christ for an inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession.”

4thly, Home evangelization is absolutely necessary to

check the rapid growth of Popery, and to prevent its revived dominance in the land.—During the whole of the last half century, Romanism has been rapidly increasing amongst us, and is at present putting forth its utmost energies. That it shall ever regain for a season its lost ascendancy on the British soil, *there enkindling, as of old, its persecuting fires, I would not venture to affirm.* This, however, I am bold enough to maintain, that unless something effectual be done, without delay, to enlighten our millions of ignorant, degraded countrymen, Popery will one day ere long contend with Protestantism for the mastery even in Britain, and lay its ruthless hand on our blood-bought privileges. The grounds of this startling assertion are easily seen. Scattered throughout the land there are already upwards of a million of Papists, perhaps nearly two millions, that are annually receiving large accessions, both by procreation and immigration. Then, farther, there are at least eight millions of non-professors, and also very many mere formalists, who are fast drifting away from the church, or embracing the cheerless dogmas of infidelity. All these are in that moral and intellectual condition which predisposes them for becoming easy victims of such a subtle and flexible religion as Romanism. While this is the case, great efforts are now being made for the spread of Puseyism, which is nothing else than ill-disguised Popery, and which often leads to its open profession, and also for the diffusion of undisguised Popery. Not only are many Puseyite priests acting aggressively on the masses, striving to inoculate them with the moral virus of their semi-popish creed, but a whole army of Romish priests, backed by the whole Popish populace, are likewise at work propagating their antichristian

tenets, both among professors and non-professors, and meeting with encouraging success.

Such considerations go to prove that Roman Catholicism is uplifting its head, and that, if left alone in its endeavours to leaven the untaught masses, it will soon carry all before it. No small alarm has been created by the recent audacious attempt to erect a papal hierarchy in England—an alarm which as yet is unconnected with any real danger; but assuredly, if the field is left open to Rome only for a few years to come, if unopposed she is allowed to send her emissaries throughout our lanes and alleys, we will have right good cause to be alarmed. Would not our danger be imminent were she to gain over to her side a large proportion of the home heathen? This it is impossible to gainsay, when it is borne in mind that we have at present between one and two millions of professed Papists in Great Britain, and six millions in Ireland. All things considered, our danger would doubtless be truly great should Jesuitism succeed on a large scale with those who belong to no denomination. If there be truth in these remarks, it is clear that, to prevent the man of sin regaining that dominancy he once possessed, we must bear down aggressively on the masses—we must go out into the highways and hedges, and compel men to come in. Lectures on Popery, meetings for imparting information upon it, and other similar measures, are highly useful and necessary; but all will be unavailing, if steps be not taken to evangelize a neglected populace. Home evangelization is, therefore, one of the most important means that can be used to prevent papal supremacy in these realms. It is to be hoped that the prevailing unprecedented agitation will awaken the country to this view of the matter, and thus conspire,

with other things, in leading to the adoption of measures for diffusing the gospel throughout the whole land, and for covering it with a contented and happy, because a religious, people.

5thly, We should diligently prosecute the reclamation of our neglected countrymen, in order to preserve ourselves, and families, and friends, from moral contagion, and perhaps eternal ruin.—We stand exposed to manifold moral evils, both from multifarious temptations, and the direct enticements of the wicked. Inducements to sin, suited to every taste, and character, and age, and appealing to every sense, every where largely abound, especially in our towns and thriving villages. Those which are entirely attributable to the unevangelized state of the country, are of themselves fitted to corrupt and destroy those who are not strong in the faith, and ever on the watch against temptation. But we are also exposed to the contamination of the wicked, by whom we are numerously surrounded, and with some of whom we must, in all likelihood, occasionally, perhaps frequently, associate. Whatever period of life we may have reached, evil communications *will* corrupt good manners. While we can scarcely mix with the best of the ungodly without being morally injured, we may be thrown into the company of the loose and licentious, who will employ every possible stratagem to make us as bad as themselves. We thus live amidst perpetual danger; in a spiritual sense, we stand in jeopardy every hour. Though those of us who are strong, and watchful, and experienced, can, with God's help, stand and withstand, deriving, it may be, little moral injury from abounding snares, yet some of our weaker and less suspicious friends, and some of the junior members of our households, may

be ensnared, corrupted, and ruined. Which of us cannot point to a friend, and say, "Here is one my soul loveth, who seemed for a while to be living under the power of religion, but who has, alas! been wrecked and ruined by the allurements of a wicked world, and the appliances of wicked men, who lay in wait for his destruction, and who never desisted till they had accomplished it, making him as vile as themselves."

While all professors are endangered by the fearful state of British society, and while many advanced in life, whose principles seemed fixed, have been drawn into the vortex of folly, sin, and shame, youth, more especially, are imperilled by prevailing wickedness and allurements. Credulous, inexperienced, and fond of novelty, they are easily enticed and overcome by insinuating companions and fascinating amusements. Invaluable as is religious training, it will not always effectually preserve young persons from the snares and fascinations by which their path is so thickly strewed. Though possessed of pious parents, through whose affectionate counsels, salutary warnings, and exemplary life, they may have been taught to avoid what is evil and detestable, and to follow after what is good and praiseworthy, yet this inestimable advantage will often prove to them a feeble barrier against temptation, more particularly when they quit the parental roof, and encounter, unaided, the bewitching enticements of great cities, and the corrupting conversation of wicked associates, who laugh at seriousness, call evil good, and good evil, and paint criminal indulgences in attractive colours. When thus exposed and tempted, too many forget the lessons and example of home, banish their religious scruples, and plunge gradually into the depths of fash-

ionable vice. There are many such awful instances, the very thought of which is sufficient to chill the blood, and to send a thrill of horror through the soul. Ah! yes, many who have been tenderly and carefully trained, and who have gone forth from the tabernacles of the righteous with their prayers and admonitions, and who exhibited promising symptoms of piety and usefulness, have soon yielded to the current of sinful solicitation, on which they set their foot when they entered the city, either to prosecute their studies, or to follow after some line of business.

Alexis was a mournful example of this kind. The child of pious parents, he was taught to read and understand the Bible—to hallow the sacred day of rest—and to commend himself night and morning to the care of his Heavenly Father. Great attention was paid to his secular and religious education, and he gave fair promise of being both a scholar and a Christian. His worthy parents rejoiced as they saw him imbibing the lessons of earthly and heavenly wisdom, and growing up, to all appearance, in the fear of the Lord. Having made satisfactory progress at school, he was at an early age sent to the university, with a view of completing his education for one of the learned professions. He entered on his studies with zest and zeal—obtained the respect of his masters and fellow-students—and carried off proofs of his diligence. Next session he returned to his *alma-mater*—resolved to devote himself to study. It was, however, his misfortune to make the friendship of other students, who were talented, but disputatious and vicious, and who, by concealing the natural depravity of vice and by flattering his pride, seduced him from his steadfastness. Having tasted the poisoned cup, he

drank with avidity of its stupifying contents, became irregular in his attendance on the classes, and returned to his loving home an altered individual. His father thought he perceived a change, and even his mother had her suspicions, but, hoping the best, nothing was said. A few months at home under parental guidance and instruction had a happy effect on his mind, and he often in secret bitterly lamented his folly, and made resolutions of amendment. At the accustomed season he again set out for the seat of learning, but, associating with the same companions, his resolutions were forgotten, and the path of sin pursued. This was his last year at college. Shortly afterwards, by intemperance and riotous living, he ruined his constitution, and brought himself to the gates of death. Those who had done so much for him, watched constantly over his dying couch, faithfully and affectionately exhorted him to repent of his sins, and prayed earnestly to the Father of mercies for the remission of his transgressions. He wept sore—begged their forgiveness—and besought the Lord to have mercy upon him. At last the vital spark fled, and his spirit returned to God to hear that sentence from which there is no appeal.

Let us condescend on another example. P——M——, the son of sober, industrious parents, was a boy of a frank, manly disposition. He received a good plain education—was taught church-going habits—and was remarkably well-behaved. At the age of thirteen he was apprenticed to a grocer in a large city, where, alas ! he associated with the wicked and learned their ways. In a short while he became desperately wicked—lost his situation—and was thrown out upon the world. Shame would not allow him to return home, and therefore he

travelled to a distant town, and was fortunate enough to get employment in his trade. For some months he conducted himself with tolerable propriety, but latterly became as outrageously bad as ever, and once more was dismissed from his situation. He wandered about the country for a considerable time in impaired health and reduced circumstances. At length he became so enfeebled and wretched, that he made his way to his native place, where he was kindly received by his sorrowing parents. Under their fostering care he still lives, and may be seen walking about ruined both in body and mind, exemplifying the scriptural saying—"The way of transgressors is hard."

Many such mournful instances might be narrated. Who, indeed, can be so ignorant as not to know that the vitiated state of society is corrupting vast numbers of the rising generation? Abounding temptations, and abounding tempters, are ruining, temporally and eternally, multitudes of promising youth, and spreading moral devastation on every side. How many parents have bitter experience of this? How many parents are weeping over ruined sons and daughters, who promised to be the support and consolation of their declining years? And what Christian parent does not fear and tremble when he thinks of his children coming in daily contact with the pestilential elements of British society—when he thinks of his youthful charge intermixing with the wicked, and walking amidst alluring snares? And how can these anxieties be calmed, these fears removed? By diminishing the temptations and the tempters, which can be effectually done only by evangelizing the nation, only by rolling back the tide of sin, and leavening all with the gospel.

It is obvious, then, that we are *personally interested* in the evangelization of the country. The wealthier inhabitants of a city are not more nearly concerned in the contrivance of sanitary measures for all its lanes and closes, as a precautionary means of warding off fever and pestilence from their own houses, than are the religious classes in contriving and carrying into effect remedial measures for the reclamation of the ungodly, as the only sure means of lessening moral contagion, and of keeping them and theirs from infamy and ruin.

Let us hear an eloquent American writer on this subject :—“ How little may it profit you, my friends, that you labour at home, if, in the next street, amidst haunts of vice, the incendiary, the thief, the ruffian, is learning his lesson, or preparing his instruments of destruction ? How little may it profit you that you are striving to educate your children, if around you the children of others are neglected, are contaminated with evil principles or impure passions ? Where is it that our sons often receive the most powerful impulses ? In the street, at school, from associates. Their ruin may be sealed by a young female brought up in the haunts of vice. Their first oaths may be echoes of profane-ness which they hear from the sons of the abandoned. What is the great obstruction to our efforts for educating our children ? It is the corruption around us. The corruption steals into our houses, and neutralizes the influence of home. We hope to keep our little circle pure amidst general impurity. This is like striv-ing to keep our particular houses healthy, when infec-tion is raging around us. If an accumulation of filth in our neighbourhood were sending forth foul stench

and pestilential vapours on every side, we should not plead as a reason for letting it remain, that we were striving to prevent a like accumulation within our own doors. Disease would not less certainly invade us because the source of it was not prepared by ourselves. The infection of moral evil is as perilous as that of the plague. We have a personal interest in the prevalence of order and good principles on every side. If any member of the social body suffer, all must suffer with it. This is God's ordination, and his merciful ordination. It is thus that he summons us to watch over our brother for his good."

Ponder what has been said, ye who professedly value your own salvation, and that of your beloved progeny and kindred ! Remember, you are not duly caring for the moral and spiritual preservation of yourselves, your families, and your friends, unless you are consulting for the welfare of others, unless you are in a constant state of aggression, using every effort to compel the wanderer and wayfarer to come in.

Neglect to seek the good of others, and you neglect your own good, and the good of those who are as the apple of your eye : strive to benefit all, and you benefit yourselves. To other motives, you *may* turn a deaf ear ; but surely not to this. It is a selfish, but, on that very account, a powerful incentive ; it appeals to your strongest and tenderest passions, and is fitted to compel you to do something for the regeneration of those deluded and degraded multitudes among whom you dwell. Arise, then, at its call, and begird yourselves for evangelistic work ; attend to its voice, that you may save yourselves, and those entwined around your affections ; help to leaven the nation with the gospel, that

you may keep your own homes pure, and make them the habitations of peace and joy.

Lastly, Our own happiness is intimately connected with the evangelization of our countrymen. All good men are pained with the misconduct of the wicked. Says David, “Rivers of tears run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy law.” Like the pious Psalmist, every true Christian is grieved at the prevalence of iniquity. Now, by diffusing the gospel throughout the nation, and lessening the number of the ungodly, our grief is diminished, and our happiness consequently promoted. Apart from this, there is a refined pleasure in striving to be useful—there is, in short, what has been felicitously termed a luxury in doing good. Philanthropy and happiness are indissolubly connected; he who labours to make his neighbours happy, increases his own felicity. Even although a man may see no fruit of his exertions, still he cannot be employed in scattering the seeds of divine truth without having his countenance brightened, and his heart gladdened—without having a stream of delight sent through his soul. If success accompany his efforts, his pleasure will, of course, be augmented. Success in any work creates no small joy, and the greater and nobler the work, the purer and more satisfying the enjoyment. When the statuary succeeds in squaring and chiselling the rude block of marble into an exact likeness of his subject, and when the painter succeeds in imparting to the outstretched canvass the very features and expressions of his living model, it is easy to believe they must be filled with no ordinary delight. But comparatively pure as is their satisfaction, it must yield to the pleasure of the Christian philanthropist, who is instrumental in renewing

the human heart, and turning it into an immortal image of God himself. His delight is great beyond conception ; it is surpassed only by the joys of the upper sanctuary. He must be happy in reflecting that God is making him the honoured instrument of doing his work, and happier still in seeing the kingdom of grace advancing on the earth. That reflection, and this spectacle must give him unbounded enjoyment of the highest kind. All, indeed, who love the Lord, must be greatly delighted in beholding one poor sinner after another yielding to the power of divine truth, and in looking around on those who were once lost to shame, progressing in all that dignifies their nature and prepares them for ineffable bliss. This *is* a noble sight ; it is the loveliest, the most enchanting, on which the eye of the Christian can rest. There is no lauded landscape of wood and water, of hill and dale, no mighty cataract roaring among precipitous rocks, no mountain lifting up its summit to heaven till it is lost amidst the clouds, that can at all stand comparison with this moral spectacle, which angels stoop to behold, and which saints gaze on with admiration, till their eyes fill with tears of joy, and their hearts break out into songs of praise,—ascribing all the glory to God, who saves whom he will, and who can make the feeblest instrumentality effectual in accomplishing his purposes.

CHAPTER X.

SECULAR MOTIVES.

“ Righteousness exalteth a nation : but sin is a reproach to any people.”—PROV. xiv. 34.

THE various religious motives which have already passed under review, should impel us to seek the moral and spiritual elevation of our country. Being, however, of a spiritual kind, they may be expected to have force principally with believers, who are actuated in all they do by a desire to promote the glory of God and the good of their fellow-men. But there are other inducements, which, though of a secular, and therefore of a lower order, ought not to be overlooked, as they are fitted to tell on all classes of the community—on those who are not moved by religious considerations, as well as on those who are. These spring from the temporal bearings of the gospel on the safety, economy, and happiness of this mighty empire, and deserve the careful study of the rulers and the ruled, the rich and the poor. He is but a sorry patriot, and a charlatan in political science, who overlooks the influence which Christianity has upon the preservation, tranquillity, and prosperity of his country.

1st, Home evangelization is closely connected with the very existence of the British nation.—The most cursory reader of history knows that, in every age, nations have

flourished for a while, and then declined and perished ; that there has been a perpetual rising and falling of monarchies and republics. Ancient kingdoms—even the Jewish, which enjoyed peculiar privileges, and the Roman, the largest and most powerful that ever existed—have long ago crumbled into pieces, and are no where to be found. Many modern empires of great extent and durability have also decayed and disappeared, to make room for others which have risen on their ruins and speedily perished. This constant rise and fall—this unceasing succession of potent communities—is not attributable, as superficial thinkers imagine, to accidental causes, but to the vengeance of the Almighty, overtaking guilty nations for their fearful depravity. As proof, it may be sufficient to quote Isaiah lx. 12, “For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee” (*i. e.* that will not serve the church of God, or in other words, God himself) “shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted.” Does not this teach that ungodliness has brought down God’s avenging arm on those kingdoms that have sunk and disappeared. An ungodly nation wages war with the Almighty, and who need therefore be told that it must be ultimately ruined. Nothing, indeed, appears plainer to the Christian philosopher, than that the numerous fallen empires recorded in history brought destruction on themselves, by setting God at defiance and braving his fury. The kingdoms of Chaldea, Macedonia, Egypt, Rome, and even Judea, afford affecting but convincing illustrations of this averment. The last mentioned, which was highly favoured, which God long protected, and which was often chastised for its shortcomings and defections, was latterly overthrown for the rejection of the Messiah, and its extreme de-

moralization. Let it then be held as a point settled, both by the testimony of Scripture and the testimony of history, that guilty nations, after subserving the great purposes for which they were called into being, have been righteously shivered into fragments by Him who rules among men, doing according to his sovereign pleasure. God has unquestionably destroyed, and will destroy, irreligious kingdoms. Individuals are *not always* punished on earth for their wickedness, as there exists a state of retribution beyond the present, in which, if unrepentant, they shall undergo merited punishment. But nations cannot exist and suffer nationally in the future world, and hence are ordinarily punished in the present for their delinquencies—first, and it may be for a series of years, with heavy calamities, and finally, if they remain impenitent, with extinction, or what is tantamount to extinction.

In connection with what has been stated, it should be carefully noted, that ungodliness has a natural tendency to work the destruction of empires, so that God can and often does execute his vengeance simply by leaving them to eat the fruit of their own doings. Wickedness corrupts the fountains of justice, relaxes every salutary restraint, begets effeminacy, turbulence, and self-seeking, and saps slowly but effectually the foundation of national greatness and national stability. It thereby naturally conduces to the overthrow of nations, by emasculating their strength, fomenting internal broils, and laying them open to the conquest of more courageous and more united neighbours. Hence irreligion and impiety, which invoke the divine vengeance, naturally lead to its execution—inflict the very punishment which heaven-defying kingdoms deserve.

True as are these statements, it is equally true that God protects and prospers those kingdoms that acknowledge his authority, and maintain the Christian religion. This may be legitimately inferred from the passage already quoted and explained. In declaring he will destroy those states that repudiate his control, God is to be regarded as declaring he will preserve and protect those that yield him obedience. Confirmatory of this deduction, he declares in Jeremiah that he will even spare the kingdom he has threatened to destroy, provided that kingdom repents of its transgressions and awakes to righteousness. History accords with Scripture in intimating that God will favour and uphold religious nations. He always defended and prospered the Jewish commonwealth when it hallowed his name, obeyed his statutes, and aimed at the promotion of his glory. And since the Christian era, we find that empires, with some few exceptions that can be explained, have stood and flourished in proportion as they have embraced, maintained, and extended the true religion.

Connected with this subject, we would observe that religion is conservative in its character, so that it securely bears up the pillars of those sovereignties that rest upon it, and that imbibe its spirit. It curbs tumultuous passions, generates contentment and tranquillity, secures the enactment of equitable laws, and begets true patriotism; and thus it tends to bless, and purify, and establish every government that gives it a cordial reception. The history of modern nations illustrates these affirmations. Is it not a fact, that the little religion our country possesses, permeating its institutions, and securing obedience to its laws, has preserved it during the recent continental commotions that

have upturned monarchies, and shaken Europe to its centre?

From what has been advanced, it appears that the existence of nations is greatly dependent on their character; that those which set Christianity at nought, and cast off the divine government, will be destroyed, while those that take the Lord for their God, and obey the gospel of his Son, will be preserved and honoured. *In a word, religion is the great conservator, irreligion the great destroyer, of kingdoms.* Hence the permanency of Britain depends not solely on her army and navy, which are usually, though erroneously, called her defences; it depends not on her garrisoned fortresses and naval armaments, but on her enlightened piety, and her respect for the laws of Him by whom kings rule and princes decree justice, and who giveth crowns and dominions to whom he pleaseth. If, then, religion be extended throughout the land, if the dense mass of practical heathen be evangelized, and national sins forsaken and national virtues cultivated, God will raise a stronger than a brazen wall around our sea-girt isle. But if, on the contrary, nothing be done for the evangelization of the perishing masses, and if, as a necessary consequence, irreligion and immorality increase, as they have been increasing for the last half century, then nothing can be looked for but the entire breaking up of our institutions, and the complete wreck of this mighty monarchy, the great bulwark of civil and religious liberty, which, for the last three centuries, has been of signal service to the four quarters of the globe, and whose downfal would be a universal calamity. Never, then, let it be forgotten, that if Britain be evangelized we may expect that, with God's blessing, she

will maintain her national independence, and her proud pre-eminence among the nations ; but that if her evangelization be neglected, and her moral sores allowed to fester, unmollified with heaven's healing balm, then may Ichabod be inscribed on all her palaces. And let it be borne in mind, too, that there is no time to lose ; the leavening process should be begun and carried on with all possible speed, as national degeneracy so extensively prevails, as to force on many sagacious and sober-minded men the conclusion that our country is almost, if not altogether, past recovery. The late Dr Arnold of Rugby, who was highly respected for his learning and sagacity said, in writing to a friend, "Too LATE, however, are the words I would be inclined to affix to any plan for reforming society in England ; we are engulfed, I believe inevitably, and must go down the cataract, although ourselves—*i.e.*, you and I—may be in Hezekiah's case, and may not live to see the catastrophe." Such, as is reported, was the opinion of that highly-gifted man, and many are disposed to agree with him, many are disposed to think that corruption has spread too wide and too deep to be stayed in its work of destruction. Although we are strongly inclined to think differently, being hopeful, yea, confident, that by proper appliances, the moral gangrene that is now wasting the nation may be cured, and the nation preserved ; yet of this are we fully persuaded, prompt persevering measures must be used for reforming British society, else Britain's sun will soon set in midnight darkness, to rise, it may be, no more for ever. Some may possibly regard this as exaggeration ; they may imagine that, after all, the danger is not so imminent as is represented ; but of nothing is the writer more thoroughly

convinced, and he would reckon it alike cowardly and culpable to withhold the honest statement of his conviction, which is shared in by many who are profoundly versant both in history and theology, and who have wisdom to discern the true causes of the rise and fall of kingdoms. The nation has not yet passed its salvable point ; but assuredly, if it goes on deteriorating as it has done for the last few years, it will soon be beyond the reach of every remedy ; as, ere long, if let alone, it will be utterly wasted by those vices which are nestling in its bosom, and which will, one day, burst forth like a destroying legion, to spread desolation over the length and breadth of the land. What, then, is judged necessary for the present crisis should be done quickly. There is no time for delay. If our mountain, as hitherto, is to stand strong, now is the time for action, now is the time for all who know the divine specific to apply it through every available channel, in every direction, that, peradventure, the process of deterioration, which has long been advancing, may be stayed, and a more healthy tone imparted to our social framework, thereby insuring, with the divine blessing, Britain's preservation to the latest posterity, and affording ground to hope that she may even yet hold a higher place than ever among the kingdoms of the world,—acting as the arbitrator of nations, the protector of the distressed, and the evangelizer of the dark places of the earth, that are full of the habitations of horrid cruelty.

2dly, Home evangelization would beneficially affect the economy and general prosperity of this vast empire.—Economy is, at this moment, Britain's watchword ; it is heard in the seat of legislation, and is re-echoed with trumpet-tongue in every town and in every hamlet.

You may hear a thousand voices simultaneously exclaiming, We must, as a nation, economize our expenditure. And this universal outcry is not made without reason, as taxation has become so burdensome as to paralyze our trade, and to threaten us with national bankruptcy. Something has of late been done to lessen our galling imposts ; and many schemes are now being propounded for reducing them still farther, and for allowing us to breathe more freely. It does not fall within our province, at this time, to give forth any opinion regarding the practicability, or comparative merits, of these plans, but to point out another of a distinctive character, which does not at all interfere with them, by which the national expenditure would be greatly diminished, the national revenue greatly increased, and the national prosperity greatly promoted. Need I say, this is the thorough evangelization of the commonwealth. It is clear, that the lack of Christianity costs the nation a very large annual outlay ; and we think it is equally clear, that its diffusion throughout all our borders would largely contribute to our national wealth.

Let us look, first, at the expense which the want of religion entails on Britain, the whole of which would be saved by the christianization of the entire community. All crime is plainly traceable to ungodliness ; so that its cost would be saved were the whole populace evangelized. By none who have right views of Christianity will this be controverted. What is crime but the noxious spawn of infidelity and irreligion ? Thoroughly christianize the land, then, and you thoroughly extirpate punishable offences, and relieve yourselves from their pressure. Religion will produce

the same moral transformation on society as it does on individuals ; and hence, as a single person leavened with its principles acts the part of a good subject, and escapes the lash of the law which is made for evil-doers, so will the whole body politic comport itself, if composed of genuine Christians. Whatever, therefore, crime costs would be saved if every Briton were evangelized ; if our fellow-subjects were all actuated by gospel principles and gospel motives. Holding this to be indisputable, let us endeavour to calculate the expense of national crime *to the nation*.

Its cost is not easily ascertained, as it consists of multifarious branches, some of which are managed nationally, and others locally, and others conjointly, by the government and local boards ; while there are many items that come under no systematic management whatever. We shall, nevertheless, be able to arrive at a tolerably correct estimate, by having recourse to the following classification :—1st, government criminal and convict establishments, at home and abroad ; 2^{dly}, county prisons ; 3^{dly}, urban and rural police ; 4^{thly}, salaries of judges, and all other functionaries connected with criminal courts ; 5^{thly}, property stolen and destroyed by criminals ; 6^{thly}, miscellaneous.

The cost of the first—that is, of criminal and convict establishments in Britain and the colonies—amounts very nearly to a million sterling.

The second is county prisons, the expense of which is defrayed by an assessment levied on the various counties throughout the kingdom. The cost of that department, for Renfrewshire, amounts to upwards of £3000 per annum. If we may fix upon its prison expenditure for its population, as an average for the

whole United Kingdom, the total expenditure of county prisons cannot be under £500,000.

The third branch of criminal outlay is, urban and rural police. We have good authority for stating, that in Paisley the police establishment costs, upon an average, £1600 per annum, and in Greenock, £2,691, which make a total annual expense of £4,291 to these two towns for police, whose services are principally required in connection with crime. After deducting a third of this amount as payment to police who would be required apart from the existence of rogues, there still remains £2,860 : 13 : 4. The Glasgow police establishment, for the year ending May 1849, after deducting expense of lighting, cleaning, and fire departments, cost £48,369 : 4 : 6.* If, then, Glasgow, Greenock, and Paisley, are unitedly assessed upwards of £50,000 for criminal police, may it not be warrantably inferred that the annual cost of police establishments, *in connection with crime alone*, throughout Great Britain and Ireland, cannot be under £1,500,000?

The fourth branch consists of the salaries of judges, and all other salaried functionaries connected with criminal courts. Having been unable to find any data for making even a probable estimate of this division of criminal expenditure, I shall set it down at the low figure of £100,000.

The fifth item we mentioned was property stolen by criminals, convicted and unconvicted. Here we are left in a great measure to conjecture, as there is no conceivable method of arriving at the truth. We have seen it estimated at £1,500,000, certainly a very moderate computation, as there are thousands of professed

* Schoolmaster in the Wynds, p. 8.

thieves who live by theft alone, and tens of thousands of occasional hands, who are always ready to do business in a quiet way—ever and anon appropriating some little article to themselves, when they think they can escape detection.

The last item we styled miscellaneous. In it we reckon payment of counsel and witnesses in criminal cases, loss of time to the prosecutors, houses of refuge, &c., which cannot be set down at less than £1,500,000.

Adding the various items now specified together, the cost of crime to this country must amount to £6,100,000, or, in round numbers, to £6,000,000. This computation does not much exceed that made by the Scottish Temperance Register for 1850. Under the heading, “Cost of Crime,” it has the following:—“From the numerous subdivisions into which the criminal department is subdivided, it is impossible to form an accurate estimate of the actual cost of crime to the country. The *Morning Chronicle*, of the 19th October 1849, states, that according to the Government estimates for the year, the cost of criminal and convict establishments, at home and abroad, amounts to £948,000. To this item should be added the cost of county prisons, local and rural police, with a variety of charges, amounting in all, it is supposed by competent authorities, to between four and five millions sterling.”

To the actual cost of crime must, in part, be added the cost of pauperism, before we get at the expense of irreligion and ungodliness to the nation. Many, doubtless, who live soberly, righteously, and godly, are impoverished by circumstances over which they have no control, and these every one who has the ability should reckon it alike his duty and privilege to help. The

poor, yea, the virtuous poor, we will always have with us, and we are strangers to Christianity if we do not generously and liberally supply their wants. It is, nevertheless, capable of proof, that by far the greatest part of poverty is occasioned by intemperance, improvidence, and other causes, which religion would partially, if not entirely, remove. Archibald Prentice, Esq., late editor of the *Manchester Times*, says (13th February 1849), "It has been proved by the Rev. Mr Lee, that three-fourths of the pauperism, which falls so heavily on us in Salford, is caused by drinking." Archibald Alison, Esq., Sheriff of Lanarkshire, says (29th May 1849), "I am decidedly of opinion, that drunkenness is the cause of one-half of the distress existing among the working classes at this moment." At a meeting of the Edinburgh Parochial Board, Mr Blackadder, a member of the Board, said, "I verily believe, that were the whole cause of pauperism analyzed, the result would be such as our chairman has represented it, viz. out of 2700 paupers, 2000 were made so by drink." These testimonies are taken from the "Scottish Temperance Register," but thousands of similar testimonies could be adduced; so that drink, exclusive of every thing else, produces, according to some, a half, to others, three-fourths, and to others, four-fifths of all existing pauperism. But other causes operate as well as drink in pauperizing individuals, which would partly be removed by the spread of the gospel among us, such, for example, as improvidence and want of economy. The tendency of Christianity is to elevate mankind, and to make them industrious, provident, and economical, and therefore self-reliant and self-supporting. And if industry, fore-thought, and economy, were more common, pauperism

would be less abundant. There are many who long enjoyed steady, remunerative employment, now receiving parochial relief, while others, whose wages were always lower, and whose household expenses were greater, are now supporting themselves in their old age on their hard-earned savings. How much may be saved by the humbler classes by care and economy may be gathered from the last report of the Glasgow National Security Savings' Bank, from which it appears that, for 1849, there were £406,602 deposited, and £181,000 withdrawn, for the purpose of relieving personal and family suffering—a sum equal to the whole amount raised from property and otherwise for the relief of the poor in the city of Glasgow and its neighbourhood. Moreover, the sums deposited were, in many cases, so small, as to show that the savings by which many of the depositors were enabled to relieve their own necessities were the result of laudable frugality and management, so that many others, who obtained assistance from the parish, might, by the same means, have assisted themselves through the medium of the savings' bank. Carefully weighing all that has been said on the causes of existing poverty, there is little doubt but that at least two-thirds of it is self-inflicted, or, in plain language, caused, in a great measure, by the want of religion. Hence, to ascertain the cost of pauperism which might be saved, we have only from its gross expense to deduct two-thirds. Now, from a Parliamentary report, moved by Sir Robert Ferguson, M.P., for 1848, it appears that the poor-rates that year for England amounted to £6,187,767; for Ireland, £1,216,679; and for Scotland, £544,334; total, £7,948,778. Two-thirds of that large sum is £5,299,185, 6s. 8d. Penury, moreover, in addition to the direct

tax of a poor-rate, costs the nation a considerable sum in the shape of begging. The *Times*, which possesses a more thorough acquaintance with the subject than the author can pretend to, estimates the cost of begging to this country at £1,500,000 per annum. This does not look like an over-estimate. Two-thirds of it is one million, which added to £5,299,185, gives us the total cost of pauperism which might be saved, £6,299,185. Add to this, £6,000,000, the cost of crime, and it will give us a grand total of £12,299,185, or, in round numbers, £12,000,000 sterling, as the probable annual expense of ungodliness to the nation—an expense which would be spared by the home diffusion of the gospel. Yes, £12,000,000 might be annually saved to the United Kingdom as a nation, *altogether independent of the enormous saving that would be effected to the mass of the people individually*, if Christianity was diffused throughout all our borders. Suppose we deduct £4,000,000 for Ireland, £8,000,000 will still be left as the cost of irreligion to Great Britain, that portion of the empire with which we have more immediately to do.

As to the power of religious instruction in diminishing poor-rates, I select a remarkable case, taken from the Minutes of Council on Education, and which may, therefore, be relied upon as correct. It is that of the schools of King's Somborne, in the south of England. The inspector of schools in which that parish is situated, says, "Mr Dawes conceived the idea of working out, within the walls of his school, a moral reformation in his parish. He found it a parish thoroughly demoralized by the operation of the old poor-law. According to information I have received from the neighbouring clergy, and from other persons acquainted with it be-

fore the time of his incumbency, I have reason to believe that there was no parish in the surrounding district which stood, in respect to the character of the inhabitants, so low. The average annual amount of the parish rate, for the seven years terminating with 1835, was £1600, on a population of 1025. The population has now increased to 1125, and the rates are reduced to £1000." Mark here what a saving on the poor-rate of one parish, and all effected in the course of a few years, by a faithful, pains-taking rector, through the agency of able teachers, and his own Sabbath-day ministrations.

Thus have we shown the probable amount that would be saved to the nation, by diffusing the gospel through its every corner and crevice. But before we can estimate the full bearing of Christianity on our national resources, we have to look not only at what would be actually saved by the complete evangelization of the land, but at what would thereby be positively gained. For example, were our debased population, amounting to about 3,000,000, reformed, and put in the way of well-doing, they would, besides saving the nation an annual outlay of £8,000,000, greatly augment its revenue which arises from the commercial enterprise and plodding industry of its well-disposed inhabitants. Farther, there are other 3,000,000, who, although they draw no aliment from the over-taxed nation, yet, owing to their inactivity, improvidence, and irregularities, are not nearly so profitable subjects as they might and would be, were they leavened with the gospel, and converted into industrious, enterprising members of the body politic. Both the classes now specified, numbering, in the aggregate, at least 6,000,000,

half of whom require national support, and half of whom are comparatively unproductive, would, if brought under the power of the truth, be a positive gain to the state, helping to fill its coffers. It is difficult to say what, if christianized, their profit would be to the community ; but surely it cannot be too much to suppose that it would amount in all to £8,000,000 sterling, which is little more than £1 for each. Those who have considered this subject—who have considered the benefit of sobriety, industry, and enterprize to the nation, will not regard this calculation as extravagant. If not, then we are entitled to affirm that the positive national gain of home evangelization would equal the actual national loss occasioned by the want of it. As much would be positively gained as actually saved, and therefore putting the sums together derivable from both sources of profit, the nation as a nation—exclusive of Ireland—would be a gainer to the extent of £16,000,000 sterling. This, though admittedly and necessarily a loose estimate, is, we are bold to maintain, an *under*, not an *over* estimate of the gain that would accrue to Great Britain, were it thoroughly evangelized. Wholly christianize it—bring living, divine truth to bear on all its teeming multitudes—turning them into true followers of Jesus, who take for their motto, “Be diligent in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord,” and I doubt not but what it would be £16,000,000 per annum richer, which would greatly lessen our burdensome and ever-increasing taxation.

Although its thorough christianization is not to be looked for till the millenium, *yet exactly in proportion as religion flourishes within it, will its expenditure decrease, and its resources increase.* Even, then, on the score

of temporal advantage, home missions should be diligently prosecuted. Self-interest should constrain the highest and the lowest, the rulers and the ruled, to spread in every direction the little leaven which leaveneth the whole lump. In advocating good houses for the labouring classes, that powerful organ, the "*Times*," said, "Selfishness, even more than philanthropy, is concerned in the question." We are wellnigh disposed to say the same in regard to home evangelization. Selfishness, undoubtedly, should prompt every professor to seek the salvation of his spiritually destitute countrymen. Hence, if philanthropy will not disturb the quiescence of our professors—if the high and holy motives of heaven-born Christianity will not awaken them from their drowsiness and dreaminess, and compel them to devote themselves to the work of the Lord among their fellow-subjects—a regard to their own self-interest should impel them to do their utmost to enlighten the whole land. It has always been, and will always be found, that godliness for nations, as well as for individuals, is profitable for all things; that it is at once the cheapest army and navy, and the cheapest police—the source of national greatness and national prosperity; and that he is the truest patriot, the noblest of nobles, whether he tenant the gorgeous mansion or the lowly cot, who, imbued with its spirit—clad with its armour—and fired with its zeal—consecrates his time and talents to its diffusion among the careless—this day visiting the dungeon of the solitary prisoner, and the next day, the dwelling of the hoary outcast—now instructing his class in the Sabbath-school, and now handing the little tract to his godless neighbour—doing, in short, with all diligence, what he can to con-

vert poor thoughtless sinners, that he may make them useful members of the commonwealth, and prepare them for admission into the heavenly kingdom, where sorrow and sighing are unknown, and where there is perfect purity and endless bliss.

3dly, Home evangelization would largely augment the national happiness.—In pacing the streets of our principal towns, and in visiting our trading and commercial establishments, our athenæums, museums, and places of entertainment, as well as in looking at the appearance of the merry crowds that turn out on gala-days, a stranger must conclude that Britain was a little paradise, where misery was comparatively unknown, and where the people were as happy as the day is long. Any such opinion is far wide of the truth. With all our wealth and refinement, and apparent happiness, there exists an amount of wretchedness and wo that is truly appalling. And is there no remedy for our unhappy condition? Can nothing be done to ease our millions of aching hearts, and to dry up our rivers of tears? Yes, there is a remedy, and that, too, close at hand, and one that may be had without money and without price:—The gospel is that remedy. It would not entirely remove our load of misery, as, while there is any sin at all, there must be suffering, but it would greatly alleviate our distresses, and spread contentment and joyfulness throughout the land; it would lessen taxation, which falls so heavily on all classes;—it would really interest the rulers in the welfare of the ruled, the landlord in the welfare of his tenantry, and the master in the welfare of his servants;—it would literally turn the whole commonwealth into one family, where the rights of all were equally respected, and the wants of all were equally cared for; where he

that had much gave to him that had little, and where the common good was the great object all sought to promote. Changing the hearts, it would also change the habits and tastes of the entire populace, making them sober, industrious, and economical, and thus it would generally benefit their worldly condition, and thereby add to their worldly comfort. These, however, would be but its reflex influences ; it would tell more directly, more surely, and more sensibly on the happiness of the masses. Though it should occasionally fail to better their circumstances, though with its possession they might still be among the poorest of the poor, yet it would make them contented with their lot, and would alleviate all the ills and sorrows under which they groaned. It would soothe their pains, bind up their wounds, support their sinking spirits, and render them proof against adversity, and all those troubles which are the common lot of mankind. Nay, more, it would enable them to contemplate God as their reconciled father, to look upon all the blessings of redemption as theirs, to luxuriate amidst the joys which well up in the heart of every believer, and to rejoice in the thought that death would introduce them to the perpetual felicities of heaven. “Religion” (says one of the most eloquent of living preachers) “has such a power of softening what is most rugged, and enlightening what is darkest, and sustaining under the heaviest pressure, and directing in the most perplexing circumstances, that as nothing can supply its place, so its possession more than compensates every other want. He who has it may be said to be wealthy in his poverty, and he who is without it to be a beggar in his abundance ; and believing that God has distributed the

allotments of life more equally than is generally thought, so that the greatest cares accompany the greatest advantages, and thus the average of comfort may not be far from uniform, we believe that not any thing but religion is wanting to raise the very lowest to respectability and happiness. It were vain to talk of covering the whole land with opulent families, neither, if it were done, should we have it covered with happy families ; but it is less vain to talk of covering the land with contented families ; this it is that Christianity, operating wondrously on all the trials, as well as all the duties of life, is both designed and adapted to effect. Let, therefore, Christianity gain entrance into the cabins and hovels of our country, and there will presently break forth upon the lower orders that golden age which has only existed in the dreams of poets. The poorest feeling themselves heirs of God, yea, joint-heirs with Christ, will bear cheerfully the afflictions which are but for a moment, knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope ; and those who have to struggle with poverty in its most appalling forms, will present the aspect of undismayed, and even rejoicing men, not to be overborne because sustained from on high, not to be disheartened because secure of immortality."

We conclude this part of the subject with a few reflections.

*1st, Nothing would be so advantageous, even for temporal ends, to our country, as its christianization.—*Certain reforms might be highly beneficial, but what would be their worth, compared with the spread of the gospel throughout the whole nation. Yet how much

is this overlooked or forgotten! We have political meetings without number—in thus speaking, I blame no party for agitating legally for what they believe to be their political rights—we have, we say, political meetings in abundance, and much agitation, first about one monster grievance and then another, but comparatively little earnestness displayed about the home diffusion of Christianity. Had people more wisdom, this would not be the case, as they would perceive that the surest way to promote even their worldly ends was to embrace the truth themselves, and to spread it far and wide among their neighbours. In no way would they lessen taxation, produce peace and plenty, and forward true happiness so effectually, as by diffusing the glorious gospel. A charter, even with twenty points, though all granted to the full, would be of little value, compared with an all-pervading godliness. How singular that this is not more generally perceived, and more eagerly prosecuted! How singular that, while all are groaning under a heavy and ever increasing load of taxes, lamenting their hard lot, and expecting Government to work miracles, that they will not unite in a crusade against sin, and in favour of religion, which would ultimately secure them every useful reform, and turn Britain, like Canaan of old, into a land flowing with milk and honey!

2dly, The withholding of the requisite funds for home religious purposes, is the worst economy, and the providing of these funds the wisest economy.—Save on what we may, we save at an immense loss if we save on religion, if we withhold what is necessary for covering the land with churches and schools, and for spreading religion to its remotest extremities. The present condition of

the nation may teach this to the dullest capacity. Is it not a fact, that comparatively little has been expended on the Christian instruction of the land, and that, as the sad consequence of this mistaken parsimony, multitudes are growing up in a state of practical heathenism ? And the result is a dead yearly loss of £16,000,000 to Great Britain alone—a loss which might be prevented by an annual outlay of a fraction of its amount. Yet, with all their wisdom, our rulers have apparently no clear apprehension of this, as they deal parsimoniously with every thing touching Christianity. Nor are the British, as a body, notwithstanding their acknowledged acuteness, generally alive to it, as their conduct testifies. Lavish in a thousand things, they are sparing on religion ; they expend twentyfold more on amusements, luxuries, and intoxicating beverages, than on the moral and spiritual elevation of their country ; in short, money for educational and religious purposes is almost the only expense that is grudged. Direct them to a good investment, and they produce loads of glittering gold ; point them out the road to promotion, and cash in abundance is freely bestowed ; show them some enticing gratification, and they empty their pockets with readiness and pleasure ; but ask them for a subscription to assist in the erection of churches and schools, and if any thing be given, it is often a mere trifle compared with the clamant necessity, and accompanied, mayhap, with a significant hint, that they will feel obliged not to be troubled soon again, as they really cannot afford to be always giving. This, I maintain, is bad economy, as for their niggardliness the tax-gatherer has to be paid double or treble what would have been required had they given liberally to the spread of religion. The less which is given

by them for Christian instruction, the less they will have on balancing their books, and the more which is given by them for that purpose, the richer they will be, and the happier too. “There is that scattereth and yet increaseth, and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, and it tendeth to poverty.”

3dly, The noblest patriots are those who devote themselves to the moral and spiritual improvement of their country.—Of the many ways of showing our love to our native land, none is equal to that of seeking its religious welfare. Those who endeavour to raise it in the scale of religion and morality, confer a greater benefit upon it, even in a temporal point of view, than any others. They are employed in erecting the only breakwater that can save it from destruction, and in applying the only specific that can diminish its crime and poverty, and promote its true prosperity. Without, then, detracting from the merits of others, are they not the best, the noblest patriots, and ought they not to be honoured and rewarded? So useful are they to their country, that all should unite in paying them homage, and in encouraging them in their labours. Even Majesty might graciously condescend to notice their praiseworthy efforts, and to bestow upon them, in token of approbation, some royal mark of distinction. It is rumoured that our gracious Sovereign is to institute a new order of knighthood for men eminent in science, art, and literature. We like the idea; but are not men distinguished for Christian usefulness even more entitled to royal regard, and would it not be well to institute an order for them? would it not be proper to bestow the honours of the state on those who stand most prominently out before the world in connection with Sabbath

schools, ragged schools, city missions, and the moral and spiritual elevation of the labouring classes? These are the most useful, and therefore the greatest men of their generation—the men who are the true conservators of the monarchy, and should they not share in its honours and rewards? Where was there a more useful, and therefore a nobler man, than David Nasmith, the founder of city missions? and where is there a more devoted man than Dr Browning, who, as surgeon-superintendent of several convict ships, has converted hundreds of the worst criminals that were consigned to his charge? One of these has gone to a place where earthly titles are useless, but the other still survives; and might not an order of knighthood be instituted for him, and others pre-eminently distinguished for philanthropic labours? Those, we know, who are truly devoted will not aspire after worldly distinctions; but still the nation owes them a debt of gratitude, and, in requital of it, as also for the encouragement of others, something should be done for honouring men, to whom especially marked honour is due. At all events, individuals who are eminently useful, who spend their time and means in benevolent efforts, and thereby lessen crime and pauperism, and their constant attendant taxation, should unquestionably be exempted from taxes themselves. This, which would be but a matter of bare justice, would put a mark of honour upon them, that to those with a limited income would be less irksome, and more welcome than knighthood itself.

*4thly, The not caring for others is a neglect of duty, which is often severely punished even in this world.—*Every one is bound not only to care for himself but for his neighbours, as every man is to look, not only on his own

things, but also on the things of others, and as we are to do good to all as we have opportunity. The enlightened, then, are to instruct the unenlightened, and to endeavour to bring them under the power of gospel truth. This is an incumbent duty, which, if neglected, will not unfrequently be avenged on this side the grave. Of such retributive justice we have an example in the present state of the nation. Whence spring the crime and pauperism, which are eating as a canker into its prosperity, but from a neglect of duty on the part of its professed Christian people? We have not cared as we ought for those by whom we are surrounded—we have indulged our ease, and allowed them to grow up, untaught, unwarned; and as the price of our culpable negligence, we are obliged to pay an annual tax of £8,000,000, besides being defrauded of £8,000,000 more. The nation is, in fact, enormously taxed, and deprived of millions which might be filling its coffers, yea, threatened with annihilation, because it has neglected the religious instruction of a great part of the community. Neglectful of souls, God is making it smart for its remissness in the payment of a heavy pecuniary penalty—a penalty not heavier than it deserves. Says Foster, “Were it not vain and absurd to muse on supposable new principles in the constitution of the moral system, there is one we might have been tempted to wish for, viz. that of all evil unnecessarily and wilfully inflicted by man, a bitter intimation and participation of it might be conveyed to him through a mysterious law of nature, enforcing an avenging sympathy in severe proportion to that suffering on all the men, be they who they might, who were really accountable for its being inflicted.” Although we are doubtless better without this

law of avenging sympathy in all its rigour, yet it does exist to some extent, as is exemplified in the temporary sufferings nations and individuals endure for not doing their duty to others. A great portion of our national imposts, together with our national financial embarrassments, is to us, in a measure, a bitter intimation of neglected duty—an intimation sufficient, at least, to make us feel that we *are* punished for not caring for the ignorant and ungodly, and that our punishment here is nothing to what it shall be hereafter, unless we awake from our supineness, and devote ourselves to home evangelization. Let us then arise, and work diligently, energetically, and prayerfully, consecrating ourselves, and all we have, to the service of our divine Master; and then, whatever may be our earthly lot, and whatever may be the fate of the nation, we shall have His approbation, and shall ultimately enjoy the reward of those who turn many to righteousness.

CHAPTER XI.

EXAMPLES.

“Then said I unto them, Ye see the distress that we are in, how Jerusalem lieth waste, and the gates thereof are burned with fire : come, and let us build up the wall of Jerusalem, that we be no more a reproach. Then I told them of the hand of my God which was good upon me; as also the king’s words that he had spoken unto me. And they said, Let us rise up and build. So they strengthened their hands for this good work.”—
NEH. ii. 17, 18.

NOTHING is at once so instructive and so influential as example. We derive through its attractive medium a distinct conception of what has been, and of what may be, accomplished in any particular pursuit. It stands in somewhat the same relation to the various employments of mankind, as illustration does to abstract reasoning. But, besides throwing a flood of light upon what has been, or may be, done in any walk of life, it is powerfully persuasive. It awakens the dormant energies of the soul, produces no small degree of generous enthusiasm, and strongly impels to action. Who has not felt its impulsive power? and who does not know what influence it exerts on the formation of the character, and the regulation of the conduct? The soldier peruses and reperuses the heroic exploits of Wallace, Washington, and Wellington, and other renowned military commanders, till he imbibes their spirit, and is fired

with a determination to imitate their valorous deeds. By carefully studying the biographies of Newton, Johnson, Ferguson, and other eminent literary and scientific men, the scholar's love of learning is strengthened, his ambition stirred to its depths, and his whole mental energy devoted to the prosecution of his studies. Watching the career of our successful merchants, numbers in humble life form the resolution of rivalling them, and are often enabled, by their sagacity, steadiness, and perseverance, to effect their purpose. Many, also, by prayerfully pondering the lives of the Bible worthies, and of the noted saints and philanthropists who have flourished in every age, have, by divine grace, been led to imitate their piety and patriotism, and to perform noble achievements in the cause of our common Christianity.

The force of example being so powerful, we would be sadly wanting in duty did we not avail ourselves of it in illustrating and enforcing the great subject of home christianization—the subject which, so far as Britain is concerned, I have no hesitation in calling the special mission of the church in our times. In adverting to this matter, we cannot but lament the paucity of good examples of *home missionaries*. Doubtless there are several, some of whose names are as familiar as household words, who stand prominently forward as noble instances of devotedness in the great cause of British missions. But, compared with the number of renowned warriors, of distinguished scholars, and especially of prosperous traders, Christian philanthropists are few in number—so few as “to be looked at with admiration, and to be spoken of as prodigies.” Why is this? The reason is obvious. The generality of mankind are bent on advancing their temporal interests, seize on every oppor-

tunity of forwarding them, and are actuated by every selfish consideration, as well as animated by a host of examples, to pursue with steady aim their worldly aggrandizement or renown; whereas it is only one here, and another there, who are so impressed with the value of eternal things, and so filled with love to the souls of men, and so moved by the example of the sainted great, as to give themselves to the work of the Lord among their perishing fellow-countrymen. Oh! it is one thing to scheme, and labour, and live for self, and quite another thing to bring the same contrivance and perseverance to evangelistic work; and hence for the thousands, and tens of thousands, that can be pointed to as specimens of worldly wisdom and worldly repute, there are but tens and twenties that can be enumerated as noble instances of entire consecration to the moral and spiritual elevation of our benighted populace. But, let us bless God for these—let us magnify his name for raising up a goodly number who, like Nehemiah and his associates of old, have nobly devoted themselves to the repairing of Zion's walls; and let us take a rapid glance at the works of faith and labours of love of a few of them, that we may be animated to walk in their footsteps, and thus to lend our aid in diffusing Christianity throughout the length and breadth of the land.

Had it not been for occupying too much space, we would first have given a succinct account of several ministers noted for their evangelistic labours, and would then have brought forward a few laymen of kindred spirit. As, however, we find the present volume is growing bulkier than we intended, we must altogether omit the former class of models, we most reluctantly pass over such examples of ministerial devotedness as

Whitefield, John and Charles Wesley, Charles of Bala, Rowland Hill, McDonald of Urquhart, and Thomas Chalmers, and must confine our selection to philanthropic laymen who have distinguished themselves in various walks of Christian usefulness. We more readily adopt this method, as we address ourselves, in this publication, especially to the laity, being desirous to enlist the whole of our Christian people, male and female, in the great work of home missions.

The first example we shall mention, is the late Howell Harris, Esq. of Trevecca, Brecknockshire. We take our account of him from the prize essay, "Jethro." "In the year 1735, he commenced a course of lay labour of a very remarkable character, which was attended with most important results. He went from house to house in his native parish, exhorting sinners to flee from the wrath to come. Advancing onward, he soon entered the parishes adjacent. He increased in courage and boldness at every step. From conversation he proceeded to exposition, and from that to preaching. Like a beacon of fire blazing on the summit of Snowdon, he soon excited the eager attention of the whole country, and great multitudes, wherever he appeared, assembled to hear his addresses. That his labours might be made to bear upon the youth, he established a school at Trevecca, and thence removed to the parish church, to which numbers flocked for instruction. He sowed beside all waters. The Welsh are a musical people, and meetings were established among the younger people for improvement in sacred music. Howell Harris generally made one at such meetings, that he might urge eternal things upon their attention with great success. This experiment amongst the

young, with its results, was attended with important consequences. He saw at once the benefits that would arise from association ; and he accordingly established regular meetings of serious persons for spiritual conversation and religious exercises in several places. Thus was laid the foundation of what is now denominated Welsh Calvinistic Methodism. For a time, all was quiet. He superintended the school through the day, preached on week nights, on the Sabbath, and on holidays. Opposition, however, arose in due time ; and its first act was to prevent him holding his school at the parish church. This harsh step contributed prodigiously to further that which his opposers considered the mischief. Released from the daily drudgery of the school, he could now preach wherever he was called over the whole country, which he accordingly did, three, four, and five times a-day. His sermons were not artificial distributions of elaborate thought ; indeed, they were not sermons at all, in the usual sense. He selected no text, he merely poured out his ideas and feelings as the occasion prompted, in a stream of terrible warning and remonstrance, mixed with gospel statement, experience, and morality. The man, his preaching, and his conduct, all were a novelty. The effect was electrical. A gentleman, a scholar, an orator, he had something to recommend him to every class. His labours were all gratuitous. He might be mad ; but it was difficult to prove or to believe him mercenary. God was with him in a wonderful manner. In the brief space of a few years, he established the incredible number of about 300 societies, or churches, in South Wales ! Three clergymen, just as they were wanted, left the Establishment, joined the followers of Harris, and took

the lead among them in all matters ecclesiastical. Things now proceeded much in the same way as in Scotland during the Reformation. These excellent men became itinerants through the whole country, and many arose of different degrees of usefulness to exhort the people; some of very bright talents, and others who preached occasionally; so that the country became greatly moved, and much people were added to the Lord."

We take, as our second example, David Nasmith,* who was born in the city of Glasgow, of respectable parents. He was, in early life, apprenticed to a manufacturer, and when his apprenticeship was completed, he changed his situation, and undertook the office of clerk and cashier to another manufacturer. On completing his sixteenth year, he became a member of an Independent church, and continued ever after a consistent, devoted Christian. While he enjoyed peace of conscience, and delighted to hold sweet fellowship with his Maker, he also made himself useful as he had ability and opportunity. From the time of his conversion, he had a great desire to enter the ministry in the Independent connection; but his desire was thwarted. The Lord had other work for him to do; and an opening at length occurred, which introduced him into his true element. It was thus:—In 1821, “the conductors of the various religious and benevolent societies in Glasgow, with a view to concentration, economy, and efficiency, had procured a large and commodious edifice, which was divided into rooms and offices suitable to their respective objects. The completion of their plan

* Abridged from the *Memoirs of David Nasmith*, by John Campbell, D.D.

required the services of an active secretary, who should be common to them all." In connection with this office, they advertised for a suitable person in the principal papers. Mr Nasmith applied for and procured the situation, for which he was eminently qualified, and, occupying which, his business was his pleasure. Although the duties of his new office were sufficiently onerous, he yet pursued his Sabbath-school teaching as heretofore, formed a young men's association for religious improvement, and made himself useful in every possible way. His situation, as secretary to twenty-three religious societies, naturally fostered his piety, and his love for the perishing multitudes by whom he was surrounded. Feeling for the ignorant and godless of his native town, he was led, in the year 1826, along with some others, to found the Glasgow city mission, upon the broad basis of the union and co-operation of all evangelical denominations. This agency rose so rapidly in the estimation of the Glasgow public, that before the end of the first year, eight evangelical denominations were united in the board of management, and eight missionaries were in the field. Soon after the establishment of this mission, the state of his health compelled him to resign his secretaryship, which for seven years he had honourably and usefully held. Although he resigned his toilsome post, he laboured as assiduously as ever in doing good. Immediately after his resignation, he proceeded to the sister isle, founded a city mission in Dublin, and made the circuit of the whole of Ireland, establishing city missions, young men's societies, and other Christian agencies, for the evangelization of that Popish and priest-ridden land. After having erected so much gospel machinery for the

regeneration of unhappy Ireland, he next crossed the Atlantic, for the purpose of planting his city missions in that extensive country, which is fast rising in political and commercial importance, and destined, at no distant day, to exercise a mighty influence on the world ; and in that quarter of the globe he was alike laborious and successful. In America, he visited forty-three cities and towns. In the States, he was instrumental in forming sixteen city missions, the American Young Men's Society, and eight or ten auxiliaries to it, and also several associations in behalf of coloured people. In Canada, he visited Quebec, Montreal, St Andrews, Fox's Point, New Glasgow, Kingston, Buffalo, and York, and formed among them, in all, fifteen societies. In the end of 1831, he returned to Europe, and, after shortly revisiting Scotland and Ireland, he proceeded to Paris, and organized a city mission in that gay, sensuous, and godless capital. From Paris he went to London, where, in 1835, after much toil and trouble, he succeeded in establishing the London city mission, which was soon countenanced and supported by the leading philanthropists of the great metropolis. In London, he also formed many collateral societies, such as the Philanthropic Institution-House, the Monthly Tract Society, and the Female Mission. Leaving the British capital, he visited Scotland, Wales, and the provinces of England, setting up in all directions city and town, family and female missions, young men's and young ladies' societies. In a word, his activity, zeal, and disinterestedness were unbounded ; and, as his biographer says, and says truly, “his disinterestedness was as strongly marked as either of the attributes already mentioned.” After leaving his first situation in Glasgow, all his labours

were entirely gratuitous, being supported for a while by a small fortune his wife possessed, and latterly by the voluntary contributions of Christian friends. He was frequently in great financial difficulties, but was always provided for; requiring, however, to perform all his journeys, and to regulate all his expenditure, in the most economical manner. Disease, brought on by incessant labour, terminated the noble career of this great and good man, in 1839, when only in his fortieth year. At his demise, £2,420 were raised by a grateful public for the benefit of his sorrowing widow and interesting family. Although he was by no means a genius or a scholar—although, in fact, he was nothing more than a man of considerable sagacity and penetration, with a talent for business, being distinguished more for his moral than for his intellectual qualities, yet he was an instrument in the hand of the Lord of doing much for the evangelization both of Britain and America.

Our third example is one who still survives, and whose sphere of usefulness is somewhat peculiar—we refer to Dr Browning, who, in 1831, was for the first time appointed surgeon superintendent of a convict ship.* Dr Browning is evidently a man of cultivated mind, great acuteness, unwearied perseverance, and fervent piety. On receiving the appointment just mentioned, he set himself to devise a scheme of education and discipline for the instruction and moral improvement of the prisoners committed to his charge. Having matured his plan during three successive voyages, in three different ships, he published it to the world, under the title of "England's Exiles." In 1846, he published along with

* "The Convict Ship," and "England's Exiles." By Colin Arrott Browning, M.D., Surgeon, Royal Navy.

it what he termed “The Convict Ship,” being a detailed narrative of the results of his system on board the “Earl Grey.” His plan, as narrated in “England’s Exiles,” and as illustrated at great length in “The Convict Ship,” is the following:—After inspecting the prisoners, to prevent the embarkation of any unhealthy individual, he assembles them as soon as possible on the quarter-deck, and delivers unto them a suitable, solemn, and faithful address, designed to impress their minds with just views of the deplorable position in which they have placed themselves, by violating the laws of God and their country, and of showing them the proper improvement they should make of their punishment. On the day after the delivery of this exhortation, he forms them into three divisions, places them under three captains cautiously selected from among their fellow-prisoners, and makes a number of minor arrangements for the preservation of order, cleanliness, and general good behaviour. Thereafter he assembles them on the quarter-deck, and faithfully and solemnly addresses them. He then takes the earliest opportunity of assembling the people, and of announcing to them the persons appointed to act as petty-officers, delivering, at the same time, an address on their appointment, relative to the nature of their duties, and what is reciprocally incumbent upon them and those committed to their charge. Next he proceeds, as soon as possible, to ascertain how they stand as to their ability to read and write, and forms them into schools according to their degrees of knowledge. On board the “Earl Grey,” the convicts “were formed into *twenty-four schools*, the *two* highest of which consisted of those who could read and write; the *third* of those who could read only; *six* of such as could read

a little ; *five* of those who knew their alphabet ; and *ten* of such as did not know their letters.” “ To each school a teacher is appointed, and a *general inspector* over the whole establishment. The teachers are chosen with great care, from among those who appear to combine with the greatest scholarship, the best abilities, the most amiable disposition, and the greatest degree of moral integrity.” Having formed his schools, and appointed the best schoolmasters that are to be had, he assembles both masters and scholars, and recites the duty of both in the hearing of all. This being done, he sets the teachers to work, instructing them himself, and closely superintending both them and their pupils. To the religious instruction of all he pays unwearied attention, explaining to them the Bible daily, and taking every opportunity, both publicly and privately, to enforce its truths on their hearts and consciences. At a throne of grace, both in their presence, and in secret, he remembers them—in their presence, in each day when he assembles them for worship, and in private, as often as he bends his knee to his heavenly Father.

His success hitherto has been remarkable. In the “Earl Grey,” containing 264 convicts, 114, or nearly the half, were apparently converted, regulating their temper, spirit, and behaviour according to the requirements of the gospel. All the rest were tolerably acquainted with the Scriptures, and some of them seemingly under deep convictions. His success in the “Theresa,” in 1845, was still more astonishing. Out of 308 convicts, no fewer than 156 professed to have received Christ, and to have dedicated themselves to his service ; the remainder expressed a hope that they had betaken themselves to the Saviour, and appeared to be actuated by gospel

principles and motives. Think, dear reader, of these wonderful facts—think that in two voyages of a few months' duration, nearly 300 notorious criminals, many of whom, on their embarkation, could not read, were seemingly instructed in the knowledge of divine things, and that nearly other 300 were, in some measure, made acquainted with the way of salvation, and more or less seriously impressed,—all by the judicious arrangements, indomitable perseverance, and singular devotedness of one individual. Dr Browning's system, which he so wisely planned, and so successfully prosecuted, deserves to be generally studied; as we are persuaded, in common with several well qualified for forming an opinion in the matter, that it is calculated “to be useful, not only in convict ships, but, with suitable modifications, in emigrant ships, as well as in our county prisons, and houses of correction; perhaps, also, in large manufactories.”

I now bring forward Harlan Page, a native of Connecticut, as an example of devotedness from humble life.* His father was a house-joiner, and he was brought up to the same trade. He married when about twenty-two years of age, and was converted shortly after that event. Ever after his conversion, his life was eminently consistent and devoted. As soon as he knew the truth himself, he was untiring in his efforts to make others see and feel as he did. “When I first obtained a hope,” he said, on his dying bed, “I felt that I must labour for souls. I prayed, year after year, that God would make me the means of saving souls.” Strange to say, he began his means of doing good by letter-writing, addressing himself to all indiscriminately to

* Memoir of Harlan Page, by W. A. Hallock.

whom he thought he could be useful. Nay, he often wrote his friends, persuading them to write others who stood in need of warning and encouragement. Thus we find him saying, in one of his letters to an early playmate:—"Since you were here, we have been visited with the gracious outpouring of the Spirit, and nearly fifty have been added to the church; but, alas! there are many promising youths who neglect offered mercy, and who, if sovereign grace do not interpose, must sink into undying woe. I doubt not, you feel how great is their danger, and long for their salvation. Do write to them; it may be God will make you the instrument of salvation to their souls. They respect you, and should you address them, they may listen to your warnings, and come to Christ! Do also pray for us. God is every where present, and will hear the prayer of faith." Besides writing letters, and sending them in every direction, he taught Sabbath schools, distributed tracts, wrote for the press, held prayer-meetings, and gave his whole spare time to labours of love. He abounded in the work of the Lord, though simply a mechanic, who had to earn his daily bread by the sweat of his brow.

In 1825, he was appointed agent of the General Depository of the American Tract Society, formed at New York, which enlarged his sphere of influence, and gave him more time for the performance of those duties that were his delight. His success, both before and after this appointment, was amazing. He was undoubtedly the honoured instrument of converting hundreds, of bringing more to repentance than many ministers, who are by no means either idle or unfaithful, and yet he was originally a humble operative, and latterly a busy agent for a reli-

gious society, with no better gifts, and no greater advantages for winning souls, than thousands and tens of thousands. Moreover, his time for labour was short, being cut down at the early age of forty-two, when in the midst of his years and of his usefulness. The secret of his success was his faithfulness, laboriousness, and prayerfulness. Says his biographer, "The salvation of individuals was the burden of his heart, and the purpose of his life. When engaged in his usual business, the religious welfare of persons, with whose state he had become acquainted, was generally pressing on his mind; and it is now known that, for several years before he died, he almost always had by him a memorandum of the names and residences of a few individuals with whom he was to converse. On these he would call as he went to and from his office, or religious meetings; and if no names were on this list, he felt that he was doing little good. He also uniformly had in his hat some awakening tracts, that he might present as he should judge them adapted to the state of those he met. Not unfrequently he would seize a few moments from his usual occupation to go out and address some individual; and when the business of the day was closed, he hastened to some meeting or other religious engagement for the evening. It is believed that an entire month has frequently elapsed, during which he did not sit down for an hour, even in the bosom of his own family, to relax his mind, or rest. Every evidence of good accomplished gave him new joy, and every opening for usefulness added a new impulse to his efforts. He felt that, under God, the eternal joy or woe of immortal souls depended on his fidelity. It is also known, that when he saw no manifestations of the outpouring of the Holy

Spirit, he would be at times in deep distress, would wrestle more abundantly in prayer, renew his efforts to arouse Christians to duty, and awaken the impenitent; and more or less conversions were almost always the result."

Let us next briefly notice a few devoted females, selected likewise from the different grades of society.

The first we shall mention is the well known Countess of Huntingdon. Sedate and seriously inclined from her very infancy, she was, shortly after her marriage, brought to rejoice in the grace of the gospel, and to count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus her Lord. Soon after she was stablished in the faith, she joined herself with the Methodists, then a new sect every where spoken against. Her noble husband did not altogether relish her connection with that despised body; but finding her determined, he gradually laid aside his prejudices, and latterly joined with her in patronizing and supporting Methodism. In 1746, while in her 39th year, she lost her endeared partner, and was left with the entire management of her family and their affairs. But, instead of repining and desponding, she sought to find consolation in living more near to God, and in devoting herself more exclusively to his service. From the time of her sore bereavement she rapidly grew in grace, and abounded more and more in every good work. Whitefield, then at the height of his popularity, she appointed her chaplain, and frequently invited numbers of the nobility to her house to hear him, who heard him attentively, and, in some instances, profitably. The eminent Mr Fletcher, vicar of Madely, and the no less eminent Mr Romaine, were also appointed her chaplains, and occasionally officiated

at religious meetings, which were held at her house almost daily when she resided in London. She loved and countenanced good ministers of all denominations, and assisted them, as far as lay in her power, to turn men from the error of their ways, and to enlarge the boundaries of Messiah's kingdom.

Her ladyship often made excursions, not only into the towns and villages in the immediate vicinity of her country residence, but also into distant districts, for the purpose of promoting the diffusion of the gospel. On these evangelistic tours, she was frequently attended by one or other of her domestic chaplains, who preached as occasions presented themselves, and who assisted her in holding conferences with pious ministers in regard to home evangelization. Open-air preaching by ordained clergymen, and even lay preaching, both in and out of doors, this Christian lady encouraged and liberally supported. "One of her servants, David Taylor, a man of ability, piety, and prudence, she sent to the neighbouring villages and hamlets, and his labours were blessed to the conversion of many souls. Soon after, he extended the range of his missionary exertions to various parts of Cheshire and Derbyshire, leaving every where behind him pleasing proofs of the divine power which attended his efforts in his Master's cause."

Lady Huntingdon lived in the most unostentatious, economical manner, cheerfully expending what she could spare in the cause of Christ. Many churches and chapels she built solely at her own expense, and many she assisted to build, by giving liberal contributions toward their erection. Having had occasion to reside for a season at Brighton, she took a deep interest in the welfare of its poorer inhabitants, and built for them

a new chapel, the expense of which she principally defrayed by the sale of her jewels, an instance of self-denied liberality altogether unequalled. Besides erecting, and helping to erect, numerous places of worship in various parts of the country, she established a seminary at Trevecca, in South Wales, for training young men to the ministry, which has sent forth many devoted and successful preachers of the Word. In short, this extraordinary woman, during half a century, devoted her time, her wealth, her influence, to the promotion of vital godliness among the masses; and her efforts were largely owned by the great Head of the Church, being crowned with remarkable success.

The lately deceased Mrs Sherman, a lady of fervent piety and cultivated mind, is the second example of female devotedness to which we direct attention.* Through the death of an only sister, and other concurrent means, she was brought to a saving knowledge of the truth, and immediately thereafter joined the communion of the church. In 1835, when in her twenty-ninth year, she was united in marriage to the Rev. Mr Sherman, the present able and honoured minister of Surrey Chapel, London, who has written her memoir. At the time of their happy union, Mr Sherman was pastor of a large and flourishing congregation at Reading, one of the lovely country towns that abound in England. As soon as she was settled in her new home, she strove to be useful, and soon began to labour assiduously in instructing the ignorant and reclaiming the outcast. In one of the poorest and most wretched localities of Reading, as we are told in her interesting

* The Pastor's Wife: a Memoir of Mrs Sherman, of Surrey Chapel. By her Husband.

biography, Mrs Sherman “commenced a systematic and regular weekly visitation of the families, instructing the poor ignorant mothers in the training of their children, and in the way to make domestic life happy, as well as in the more important lessons of evangelical truth. In twelve months’ labour, the locality assumed an air of greater cleanliness and comfort, many of its inhabitants attended the preaching of the gospel, every child capable of leaving home was sent to a Sunday school, and some few instances of hopeful conversion were the high reward of this disinterested labour of love.” In 1836, her talented husband received a call from Surrey Chapel, signed by above 1200, which he accepted, and in August of the same year was inducted as pastor of that influential congregation. On her removal to this wide sphere of usefulness, Mrs Sherman devoted herself, heart and soul, to the interests of the church and its institutions. She began by forming a class of young females, too old to attend the Sabbath school, and too young and inexperienced to assist in teaching, with a view of impressing their minds with gospel truth, and of making them intelligent and useful Sabbath-school teachers. After nearly a year’s successful tuition in this class, she was solicited by the young ladies of the congregation to extend similar advantages to them, with which solicitation she complied. To both of these female classes, she devoted much of her time and strength, preparing for them most carefully, and leaving nothing undone to make all who attended them enlightened, zealous Christians. And her labours were greatly blessed. Most of her scholars, under her skilful, prayerful training, soon joined themselves to the church, walked consistently, and endeav-

voured, in one way or other, to be serviceable to others. In addition to the efficient superintendence of her classes, this exemplary woman organized two maternal associations, which were productive of incalculable benefit.

In the spring of 1842, her husband's labours began to affect his health, and he was advised, for its restoration, to take a tour on the Continent, and to try the application of the water-cure, as practised by M. Priesnitz, at Gräfenberg. She was required to accompany him; and thus, for a season, her useful engagements were interrupted. When abroad, she embraced every opportunity of doing good, and, on her return home, she resumed her classes, infused new vigour into her maternal associations, formed a missionary working-party, interested herself in the various religious institutions, counselled the perplexed, comforted the afflicted, and laboured for Christ in season and out of season. In 1845, she caught a cold, from the effects of which she never recovered, and departed this life on the 18th of May 1848, in the forty-second year of her age. "Thus," as her husband and biographer says, "terminated the career of one whom God had graciously endowed with largeness of heart for his service on earth, whose removal in the prime of life has excited the sober luxury of sanctified grief, and whose eminent piety shed a lustre on her character, and left a beautiful example of female devotedness for others to imitate."

Sarah Martin, of Great Yarmouth, may furnish us with a third example of female devotedness. She was brought up to the business of a dressmaker, and followed that occupation in her native town. During her girlhood, she had an indescribable aversion to the Bible,

and a bitter prejudice against the gospel of Christ ; but in her nineteenth year, she heard a sermon which powerfully arrested her attention, and which was made instrumental in effecting her conversion. No sooner was she converted, than she longed to point out to others those fountains of joy whence her own comfort so largely flowed. And soon she found an opportunity of doing good, by being admitted as a teacher in a Sabbath school. Nor did she teach in vain, being made the honoured instrument of turning the hearts of several of her scholars to the Saviour. In 1810, she had a strong desire to visit the poor in the workhouse, and the prisoners in the jail ; and her desire in both respects was gratified, to her great joy and delight. She taught the prisoners reading and writing, read to them the Scriptures, set up regular Sabbath service, which till then had been neglected, and spared no toil, no trouble, in endeavouring to bring to a saving knowledge of the truth the unhappy persons she visited. Ultimately she sacrificed one whole day every week, in order to be more serviceable to her incarcerated charge. Hearing of this great sacrifice, a lady, deeply interested in her labours, paid her the wages of another day every week, that she might have two days to devote to the jail weekly. Along with her attention to the inmates of the prison, she continued for some time to instruct the paupers in the workhouse ; but this department of duty she was obliged to resign, owing to the impure air of the close sick rooms beginning to affect her health. In lieu of this employment, reluctantly relinquished, she was permitted to conduct a gratuitous school in the workhouse. At length, she devoted her whole time to this school and the visitation of the prisoners, living

upon the interest of a small sum of money she possessed. Judging her means totally inadequate for her support, and convinced of her great usefulness, the corporation of Yarmouth voted her a small salary from the funds of the town, which she was prevailed on to accept. She pursued her useful career till 1843, when she was seized with an illness that terminated fatally. Her labours in every department of usefulness were greatly blessed, and were again and again reported to Parliament by the Inspector of Prisons in his annual report. In one of his reports, the inspector says—"There are several cases where her attentions have been successful, and have apparently reclaimed the parties, if the continued good conduct of the discharged be admitted as satisfactory proof." In another of his reports, he says—"She still continues her exertions with undiminished energy. Independently of her performing divine service, with a sermon on the Sunday morning, not a day passes without her visiting the prison for the purpose of instructing both sexes in reading and writing, and superintending the work provided by her. It is pleasing to see how much good has been effected by personal exertion and a trifling expense." •

The foregoing illustrious models of male and female devotedness, teach powerfully what one zealous person may do for Christ. How much did every one of them accomplish *singly*? Not only did the Countess of Huntingdon and Howell Harris of Trevecca, whose station gave them great influence, perform notable things, but even the others, two of whom were comparatively uneducated, wrought wonderful works. Think of the numerous conversions of the most de-

graded mortals that have been instrumentally achieved by Dr Browning, a surgeon ! Think of the almost incredible labours, and astonishing success, of David Nasmith, a clerk ! Think of the plans, and exertions, and converts, of Mrs Sherman, a minister's wife ! Think of the single-heartedness, untiring zeal, and numerous spiritual progeny of Harlan Page and Sarah Martin, the one a mechanie, the other a sempstress ! Think of what all these *individually* accomplished in their different stations and walks of usefulness ! *The history of each one of them proclaims that the power of individual effort, with God's blessing, is PRODIGIOUS.* Reader, treasure this up in thine heart, and let it stimulate thee to noble deeds. You really do not know what you can do for God till you try it. Begin, then, without waiting for the assistance of others, and you may far surpass your own expectations. Realize your individuality, and act accordingly. Let thy resolution be that of James Brainerd Taylor when a student at college. "Resolved," he writes, "that I will, the Lord being my helper, think, speak, and act as an *individual* ; for as such I must live, as such I must die, stand before God, and be damned or saved, for ever and ever. I have been waiting for others ; I must act as if I were the only one to act, and wait no longer."

The preceding examples of devotedness serving to show what may be done for Christ by both sexes, *singly*, in every station of life, should not only be contemplated and admired, but honestly and constantly imitated. Yet, alas ! many rest contented with their contemplation and admiration, forgetting that the very object for which they are brought forward, and for which they should be looked at and studied, is imitation. They view them

merely as they do some enchanting scenery, or some rare piece of workmanship, and after satisfying their curiosity, and perhaps bestowing their plaudits, pursue their beaten track of inactivity as usual, oblivious of their merits, and unmoved by their heroic deeds. How blamable! how censurable! how pitiable! Instead of thus acting, Christians should copy such of the fore-mentioned examples as correspond with their position in society. Equalled they may not readily be, but imitated they ought to be. Why should not every one imitate them, when they imitated Him who went about continually doing good? Why should not every Christian man, and every Christian woman, make the saving of souls their great business? Away with every excuse. Don't plead want of time, want of ability, want of opportunity. All such excuses are unworthy, unmanly, and, in nineteen cases out of twenty, totally inadmissible. Rise, ponder, plan, work, pray, and bugbears will disappear. Attempt great things, and you may expect great things. So live that your life may be worth writing and imitating, for if not worthy of being written and imitated, it is far from being what it ought.

If the examples adduced might be imitated and equalled, are they not fitted to mantle our faces with shame? Do they not make most of you, my readers, feel that you are actually doing nothing?

Are you of elevated rank—what, then, have you done as compared with the Countess of Huntingdon and Mr Harris? Do your exertions and sacrifices approach to theirs? Lady Huntingdon economized her means, which were never large, that she might support ministers and erect churches. Yea, at one time, when straitened for money, she sold her jewels, that she

might build an house to the Lord. Do you, ye grandes, who profess to be Christians, so regulate your expenditure as to be enabled to erect places of worship, and to support ministers and preachers? Did you ever deny yourselves any everyday luxury, that you might have to give to the cause of Christ? Did you ever erect one church, or one school, in a poor locality, solely at your own expense? You have your large retinue of servants to which you are entitled, but have you also your large retinue of home missionaries? *Have you even one home missionary in your pay?* You visit places of fashionable resort, do you ever personally visit the houses of the poor, and converse with them about their souls? We leave these questions to your own consciences to answer. There is a time coming when they shall be invested with unspeakable solemnity.

Do you occupy the middle or the humble ranks of life—what, then, have you done, as compared with Dr Browning and Harlan Page, Mrs Sherman and Sarah Martin? Will your labours in the cause of Christ bear comparison with theirs? Mrs Sherman made the instruction of others one great object of her existence, and prepared as carefully for her classes as most ministers do for the pulpit. In the course of a short year, she morally revolutionized a spiritually destitute locality. Are you walking closely in her footsteps? What classes have you, ye matrons of Britain? What preparation do you make for them? What time do you set apart for visiting those who care for none of these things? Ye male and female workers, who throng our churches, and crowd our communion tables, do you come near to Harlan Page and Sarah Martin. The former had his

duties, morning and evening, which he felt could not be postponed ; he laboured unremittingly, and had evidence, before he died, that more than one hundred souls had been converted to God through his own direct and personal instrumentality. The latter sacrificed one day per week for the instruction of poor prisoners, besides devoting her whole spare time every day to benevolent efforts. Do you, ye Christian labourers, approach these persons in devotedness ? What time do you set apart every day for doing good to others ? What children do you instruct ? What visits do you make to the abodes of the careless ? What souls do you suppose you have converted ? Consider these questions, and blush for your slothfulness. It cannot be concealed, and it should be proclaimed with trumpet-tongue on the house tops, that the vast majority of our church members, with abilities and opportunities as great as a Nasmith, a Page, and a Martin, are comparatively doing nothing. Souls are perishing, but they are literally standing idle, solacing themselves, mayhap, with the vain plea that they can do little. Page and Martin might have done so, as well as you, ye idlers, ye slothful servants, but they acted differently ; they tried to do what they could, and had a rich harvest of souls for their reward. Drink in the inspiration of their example, and embrace, like them, every opportunity of doing good, and the Lord, you may expect, shall be with you, confirming the word with signs following.

CHAPTER XII.

DEVOTEDNESS.

“ Who then is willing to consecrate his service this day unto the Lord ? ”—1 CHRON. xxix. 5.

OUR first great concern, as professing Christians, is to make sure of our own salvation. We should leave nothing undone for ascertaining whether we have accepted of Christ, and are his willing and obedient subjects. Frequently should we examine ourselves whether we are personally interested in the covenant of grace, and have bowed beneath the Saviour’s sceptre, prostrate but rejoicing. Religion is a personal thing, and we should not rest contented till we have a well-grounded hope that our sins are pardoned, our natures renewed, and our title to heaven established. Devoid of a firm persuasion that we are what we profess to be, and that all the blessings of redemption are ours, we are depriving ourselves of true enjoyment here, and resting our happiness hereafter on a bare peradventure. Besides being highly injurious to ourselves, this hinders us from being largely serviceable to others, as we will not do great things for our dear Redeemer till we have closed with his offered mercy, and have some good ground for believing that we are his. Without faith, and holiness, and hope, we cannot, if we would, do much for the

benefit of the perishing. "We must first feel the power of religion, or we cannot recommend it with an unaffected and prevalent zeal." Neglect then what we may, it should not be our own eternal interests; leave undone what we may, it must not be the securing of our own everlasting welfare.

But while we make our own spiritual wellbeing our *first*, we are not to make it our *only* business. Having secured our own salvation, we are then to seek the salvation of others; having yielded our hearts to God, we are next to consecrate ourselves to his work—the furtherance of the gospel. God demands that as soon as we know the Saviour, we should seek to make him known; that as soon as we are converted, we should endeavour to convert others. Moreover, between us and the whole family of man there exists an intimate relationship, in virtue of which all men have a claim upon our sympathy and assistance. In other words, we are bound by the ties of brotherhood to assist them. Hence, if we withhold from them what we have in possession, and what would essentially benefit them, we are guilty of a dereliction of duty, arising out of our moral relation. If, for example, some of us possessed a specific which would heal that fearful malady that has of late, once and again, visited our shores, spreading death and consternation all around, would not our common relationship lay us under an obligation to make it known to all our countrymen, yea, to all others in every part of the world? And can our responsibility be less in regard to a cure for a moral than for a natural disease? Assuredly not. Consequently, as we are in possession of a heaven-gifted remedy, that can cure all moral distempers, are we not bound to make it known

to those who are spiritually diseased, nay, to press it upon their acceptance, should they, through ignorance or dislike, overlook and despise its healing virtues? Undoubtedly; and our sin is not small if we are negligent of this responsibility.

Mindful, therefore, of this accountability, and of all that God has done for us who believe, and of that entire devotedness the cause of Christ demands, we should devote ourselves to the conversion of our fellow-sinners every where,—of those more especially who are living beside our own doors. When we think of God's gracious dealings with such of us as have been washed, and justified, and sanctified, ought we not, out of love and gratitude to God, to engage with heart and soul in his service? Reflecting on the grace and goodness displayed in our redemption and regeneration, should we not be constrained to say, what do we more than others? what exertions, what sacrifices, more than others, do we make to instruct the ignorant, to arouse the careless, to strengthen the weak, to comfort the desponding? While the great things our heavenly Father, out of his mere good pleasure, hath done for us, should constrain us to devote ourselves to his service, it is obvious that his cause, both at home and abroad, needs our entire devotedness. The spiritually destitute state of our own land, with which at present we have to do, requires our most energetic, devoted labours. This it does, not only on account of the vast numbers who make no visible profession, but also on account of the naked infidelity and fearful corruption of a great proportion of these neglected beings. Our lanes and alleys are inhabited by human creatures, who have undergone a moral collapse, being hardened through the indulgence of sin

and the adoption of pernicious principles, and thereby so steeled against the arrows of the gospel as to render their conversion a difficult matter, requiring no ordinary exertion on the part of those who know the truth. Devotedness unquestionably is absolutely essential to success. But what is devotedness in relation to this subject? It is the consecration of ourselves, and all we possess, to the reclamation of our thoughtless, degraded, perishing countrymen. For stimulating us thus to consecrate ourselves, let us often think of the devotedness of the blessed Saviour, and of that band of worthies who have set him before them as their great model, and let us also reflect on the various powerful motives by which entire dedication to the work of the Lord is enforced.

Let us meditate on the devotedness of Emmanuel, and of those Christian heroes who have striven to follow him fully.—In zeal, as in every thing else, Christ set us an example, that we might walk in his steps. His soul was absorbed in the great work of saving sinners. He went about continually doing good; and he died, at last, to save guilty rebels. His whole life was devotedness, embodied and exhibited—devotedness altogether unparalleled, and such as never can be equalled. But although it cannot be reached, it is for our imitation; and we should constantly set it before us for that purpose. Many noble-minded men, of whom the world was not worthy, have made it their model, and have set us patterns of consecration to the best of causes, which we ought to consider and to imitate, and which it is possible for us to equal, if not to surpass. Apart from apostles, who went every where preaching the word, and who counted not their lives

dear that they might enlighten and convert perishing sinners, the church in all ages, especially in modern times, has produced some noble specimens of devotedness,—men who lived and laboured for Christ, whose mental energies, and whose worldly all, were consecrated to the advancement of his kingdom, and who toiled and suffered, almost beyond conception and endurance, for the good of others. The self-denying zeal of some of these, we were led to contemplate in the last chapter, and we trust it will not be lost upon us. We cannot forbear noticing, in addition, the apostolic devotedness of two Moravian youths, whose example cannot be too frequently held up before the eye of the Christian Church. Their names are, J. Leonard Dober, and Tobias Leupold. Anthony, a negro and native of the island of St Thomas, in the West Indies, narrated to the Moravians that he had a sister in that country who earnestly desired to be made acquainted with the way of salvation, and that his countrymen were pervaded by a general desire for Christian instruction; but at the same time stated, that the negroes, from the rigour and duration of their labours, could not be taught the doctrines of the gospel, unless their instructor was a slave himself, who might teach them amidst their avocations. The two young men we have mentioned were so deeply impressed with this affecting representation, that, with a devotion rarely if ever equalled among mere mortals, they offered to go to that distant island, not only in the capacity of missionaries, but, if requisite, **TO SELL THEMSELVES AS SLAVES**, for the purpose of teaching the poor negroes, especially the sister of Anthony, who ardently longed to know about Jesus, and the way to heaven. Here was

a noble example of self-consecration, may we not say, self-immolation, to the cause of the Redeemer ? Now, we ought to ponder this, and the highest examples of self-sacrificing zeal recorded in the annals of the church, that we may be animated to give ourselves wholly to the work of the Lord—that we may be constrained to regard the salvation of sinners, next to our own, the work for which we should live, and in performing which we should glory to die. Let us, then, ever set the most zealous, the most devoted, before us, as those, next to Christ, whose life and labours we should imitate. We injure ourselves, and the cause we ought to have at heart, by being too inattentive to this, and by taking our rule of action too low, even from the generality of professors. Be it ours to guard against this double injury, by meditating upon the galaxy of worthies whose life is summed up in the single word, devotedness, and by striving to equal, yea, outrival them, in every department of usefulness. If we wish to tell upon the present generation—if we wish to be the moral conservators of our country, “ we must form our rule, both of judgment and action, on some other method of conception, and some other standard of demonstration, than any which is commonly received among us. Is it befitting the followers of Christ to be content with things mean and little, and lifeless, even though the world or the church may call them honourable, when called to participate ? Let us review our inconsistency, our heartlessness, our degeneracy, while we have borne a name so little honoured ; and let us rouse our thoughts to deeds more worthy of our calling. While ruin is still advancing onward, and deepening every hour, while hell and destruction are stretching wide for their

prey, is it becoming a Christian, a man who calls himself a Christian, to pause ere he shall use efforts to pluck from their danger the beings who are floating on the waters, and are near the eddies, and are nigh to the fathomless abyss ? Or shall he think of these things but with a languid purpose, and with a fainting heart ? I say nothing of the impossibility that such a man should be a partaker of his joy, should drink of his cup, or be baptized with his baptism ; how can he hope to be accounted his in the great day of approaching decision ? How can he hope to be among that happy and magnanimous band of sainted heroes who shall not be ashamed before him at his coming ? What flowers has he added to his garland ? what palm branch has he gathered, with which to strew the way at his arrival, or how shall his dark spirit break into shouts of gladness when earth, and hell, and heaven, resound the loud hosannahs, and prolong and reverberate the strain ? ” *

The energy and activity of all the emissaries of evil, from Satan downwards, should rebuke us for our supineness, and should stimulate us to devotedness in the noblest of causes.—Our great adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour. He is never idle ; his malignant exertions are uninterrupted ; he prosecutes his work with untiring assiduity, counting it his business to people the dark and dreary regions of wo with ruined souls. Those legions of subordinate spirits who own his sway, are equally active ; they never weary in the prosecution of their infernal work. If, for a season, they depart from any of the objects of their attack, it is that they may renew their efforts with redoubled diligence and violence, doing

* M'All.

every thing within the compass of their power to drag the whole human family to the pit of despair. "When the unclean spirit goeth out of a man, he walketh through dry places seeking rest but finding none. Then he saith, I will return to my house from whence I came out, and when he is come he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth he and taketh with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first."

And those whom Satan and his subordinates succeed in corrupting and enslaving, seem to partake largely of their zeal. When men are fairly gained over to the side of the grand adversary, they are characterized by untiring energy in the cause of evil; they labour to bring others to their own mode of thinking, and to their own habit of life. Witness an example of this in the ancient Scribes and Pharisees, who compassed sea and land to make a proselyte. Witness an example of this in the rise and progress of Mahommedanism, all of whose early converts devoted themselves to its propagation, reckoning it an honour to die in extending its sway. Witness a still more noted example of this in the great Roman apostasy. How energetic, how laborious, how self-sacrificing, how persevering, are its agents, from the Jesuit, that incarnation of false zeal, to the meanest agent in its employ, may we not say, to the humblest of its members? It never wants missionaries, even for the most arduous work; and these missionaries never want employment. The whole Romish Church is, in reality, a propaganda, whose zeal as an associated body is unbounded, and any of whose adherents are ready, at its bidding, to go any where, and to do any thing, for

the promotion of its interests. Witness, too, as examples of devotedness, the avowed disciples of infidelity. Those deluded men are unremitting in their exertions to leaven others with their principles, they propagate their pernicious tenets with an ardour worthy of a better cause. In our workshops and factories, where the professed disciples of Jesus are silent, and almost ashamed to avow their Christianity, the disciples of Paine and Hume advocate scepticism with daring effrontery, and too often with ruinous success.

Should we not feel ourselves rebuked, to think that all the apostles of deceit and error should be so active in propagating what will ruin souls, and that we, who profess to love and follow Jesus, should do so little to save them ? That those who are waging war against Messiah and his people, should be actuated and animated with irrepressible zeal, and that those of us who profess to be fighting on his side should be comparatively listless and inactive ? If any thing like what we ought to be, we must feel deeply humbled and reproved, when we give attention to this matter. O may the reproof from thence not be lost upon us ! may it be so pondered, and so sanctified, as to constrain us to employ the same energies in advancing the kingdom of Christ that the emissaries of the prince of darkness employ in advancing his kingdom. How reasonable is this ; and were it any thing like general, how soon would the church, under God, arise and put on her beautiful garments ; how soon would she not only encircle every inch of British ground, but also every part, even the remotest, of the habitable globe !

And while it is reasonable, we should be as unwearied in doing good, as deceivers are in doing evil ; the very

fact of their activity, the very fact that they are toiling day and night to beguile the unwary, makes it all the more imperative on believers to clothe themselves with zeal for counteracting their efforts, and for rescuing poor souls from their entanglements. If they are ever at work—ever planning and scheming how to deceive and destroy mankind, and to turn earth into a nursery for hell, what need that those who are on the Lord's side should be as active and zealous in delivering men from their snares, and in turning earth into a nursery for heaven ? It is only in this way, with help from above, that their exertions can be neutralized, that the prey can be delivered out of the hands of the spoiler, and that the church can rise gloriously on the ruins of that empire, which has too long cursed our world, and plunged countless myriads into the bottomless abyss. O that Christians, inspired with this thought, would come to the help of the Lord against the mighty ! O that, actuated by this consideration, they would rival the disciples of Loyola,—turning the Christian Church into a propaganda for good, and giving themselves no rest, and sparing themselves no sacrifice, till not only Britain, but also every continent and every isle, were leavened with the gospel, and rendered holiness to the Lord !

We would farther remark, there is no neutrality in the cause of Christ, and that it is only by entire devotedness to that cause we altogether escape giving it partial opposition. —In other causes, such as wars and political agitations, we may remain perfectly neutral—we may espouse neither one side nor the other. It is different in regard to the cause of Him with whom the destinies of the world are inseparably linked ; men must either take

part with him or against him, must either oppose or promote his work, as he himself says, "He that is not with me is against me, and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad."* And the reason is obvious; men are either unremittingly giving out influences for good or for evil—are either sending forth, in a continuous stream, what goes to curse or to bless the world. Every one, by his example and instructions, his tone and temper, tells either beneficially or prejudicially upon the circle of his acquaintance, throughout every year, every day, and every hour of his earthly pilgrimage. Whether men be aware of it or no, they are either acting as pioneers of heaven or of hell, either retarding or promoting the kingdom which Christ came to erect, and which will, one day, be established on the top of the mountains. What a startling thought!

Moreover, it is only by devoting themselves entirely to the work of the Lord that they can escape partial opposition to it. To what extent they are not wholly with Emmanuel, to that extent are they hostile to him. Dr Harris states this so powerfully, that I cannot forbear quoting his statement, although somewhat lengthy:— "Entire devotedness to the cause of Christ is necessary, as the only alternative of partial hostility against him at present. 'He that is not with me,' says Christ, and therefore, during every moment in which he is not with me, 'is against me.' Lax views on this subject are the origin of much of that inferior piety by which the church is enfeebled, and its usefulness impaired. Christians generally appear to proceed on the supposition that there is a sense in which they are still partially their own; that there are considerable portions of their

* Matt. xii. 30.

time in which they are at perfect liberty to relax as they please ; that at such times their conduct is quite neutral in its influence ; that any thing, short of positive hostility against Christ, is to be put down to the account of so much service done for him. Now, were this supposition as true as it is false ; were it quite possible for the Christian to withhold from Christ a portion of his resources, without rendering, by such an act, the least advantage to the foe, it would still be highly inconsistent and unjust. For at the very moment we are relaxing in his service, unnumbered agencies of his are at work for us. At the moment we are self-indulging, we are doing it with his money, in his time, at his expense, by the light of his sun. But when we remember that every particle of influence withheld from Christ, is so much employed against him—that neutrality here is impossible—the consequences of such conduct are alarming. Were it possible for us to ascend some mount of vision, whence we could look down upon the consequences of our conduct, we should see, that at the moment when we thought ourselves most perfectly detached from all around us, there is a sense in which we were then standing in the midst of the universe, with lines of relation uniting us with all its multitudes. We should see, that often when we thought our character most unobserved and at rest, it was giving out moral influences without intermission ; that at the moment they ceased to be good, they began to be evil ; that, however apparently unimportant, they have ever since been swelling the tide of evil by which myriads are borne on to perdition. We should see that the world is the scene of a moral conflict ; that in that conflict we hold an appointed post ; that at that post every thing we

possess is a weapon of war ; that never have we ceased to wield it, either for evil or for good ; for the moment in which we thought we were only pausing, a shout of joy ran through the ranks of the invisible foe, who beheld in that pause a proof of our weakness, and the sign and means of their own strength ; so that, when we thought we were only doing nothing for Christ, they hailed us as an accession to their own ranks acting against him ; and thus we should see why it is that Meroz was cursed because they came *not out* to the help of the Lord, and why it is that in the final judgment, those who did nothing will find themselves standing side by side with them that did evil, and involved in the same condemnation.

“It follows, then, that if we are doing a particle less than all we can do for the kingdom of Christ, we are incurring a proportion of the guilt of those who are doing nothing, and for the very same reason. The obligation which binds us to take any part in the grand conflict which is waging, not only holds us responsible for doing every thing in our utmost power, but actually regards whatever is short of this as so much opposition, with our cognizance, against him. Let us not suppose, then, that because we are doing something, we are sufficiently demonstrating our fidelity to his cause ; if we are only doing one-third, so to speak, of what we could do, the other two-thirds are operating, *as ours*, in hostility against him, as truly as that one-third is operating as ours in his behalf. Precious influence ! each grain of which exceeds all calculable value. Well might our Lord be jealous for every particle, since there are but two treasures in the universe,—one for Him, and the other for Satan ; so that every grain

withheld from his, falls into and enriches the other. And well may the Christian regard himself with all the sacredness of a temple, since he cannot yield himself to any other claimant than Christ, even for a moment, without yielding himself, during that moment, to a hostile party. So that, in truth, our only escape from partial hostility to Christ, is that of unreserved devotedness to his service.”*

In connection with what has been stated, and by way of still farther enforcing entire devotedness to the cause of Christ, I would observe, *that we will never altogether cease giving out influences, either for good or for evil, somewhat in proportion to the manner in which we lived on earth.*—Not only will we act beneficially or prejudicially during our lifetime, but also long after the close of our earthly career. Both departed sinners and departed saints exercise a posthumous influence, which is not without its bearing on Messiah’s kingdom. This is not difficult to perceive. On their removal from the world, men leave behind them others who are still influenced by their example and teaching, and who actively work either for or against the Lord. These, again, on their departure, likewise leave behind them friends and neighbours, who, having imbibed their spirit, also operated on the living beings with whom they associated; and so on, *ad infinitum*. As, then, to influence of one kind or other, man may be said always to survive; being dead, he yet speaks to successive generations. During his brief sojourn on earth, he sets moral nature in motion, which continues its movements after his death. In this respect, he resembles the individual who imparts the motive power to some

* The Great Commission, pp. 473-475.

piece of machinery, by means of which, even in his absence, it continues to revolve and to perform its appointed task. Be it, then, remembered, that though man dies and is buried, his moral influences are not entombed along with him. No; he still lives in others as an emissary of heaven or of hell, **AND OFTEN DOES MORE FOR GOD, OR MORE FOR SATAN, MORE TO SAVE, OR MORE TO DESTROY SOULS, AFTER HIS DEATH THAN DURING HIS LIFE.** Bolingbroke, Hume, and Paine, are still actively employed on the side of evil, are still fellow-workers with the prince of darkness in ensnaring mankind and in robbing God of his glory ; and so, in some measure, are all others who lived for themselves, and died at enmity with their Maker. Every ungodly man, in proportion to his standing, energy, and activity, while in existence, continues his destructive agency after the termination of his earthly sojourn. In like manner, all who lived and laboured for God, as long as they were spared, will live and labour for him when they are gone, and that somewhat proportionally to the moral and mental endowments they possessed, and the zeal they displayed in their lifetime. Luther, Knox, Melville, Chalmers, are still telling influentially on the church,—are still speaking powerfully and impressively, and helping forward the chariot-wheels of salvation ; and all others of less note who devoted themselves to the cause of truth and godliness, are still speaking, and acting, and living for Christ, while their ashes are mouldering in the tomb. Are not these impressive thoughts ? O think, my readers, that after your tongues shall have been sealed in death, and after the green sod shall have covered your mortal remains, you will still be pleading for God, or pleading against him—

still lending your aid to people the mansions of bliss or the regions of wo, and that, too, somewhat proportionate to your talents and labours when actors on this terrestrial stage! Yes, as to moral influences, proportional to what you exercised on earth, you will possess a deathless immortality.

The consideration now stated is equally calculated to inflame the zeal of the saints, and to arouse and alarm the ungodly. It is powerfully fitted to make God's people, yea, the most devoted of them, more devoted; as all they are instrumental in converting will operate to latest posterity on the side of godliness, whereas all they leave unconverted, which they might have brought to the Saviour, will continually operate against Christianity, strewing moral ruin in their path. Suppose a zealous Christian succeeds, through divine help, in bringing six souls to Jesus, but allows other two to perish, which, had he rightly improved his talents and opportunities, he might have saved, then after death his influence for good is one-third neutralized; or, in other words, he continues for ever to work both for and against the Saviour, although his beneficial operations predominate. Again, suppose another Christian converts only one, when, with his gifts and opportunities, he might have converted twenty, then, on his translation to the mansions above, nineteen-twentieths of the good influence he might have exercised is totally lost; for one agent he keeps in the field to do battle for the Lord, he employs nineteen to aid his grand opponent, and to forward his infernal plans. Should not these things impel believers to give themselves wholly to the service of their heavenly Master, so that, when their

season of labour is terminated, they may not be reproached with the thought of having left behind them several to oppose the cause of truth and godliness, whom they might have turned into its defenders and promoters ?

And, although not strictly connected with our subject, yet we cannot help stating, that while our posthumous influence should kindle into a flame the zeal of all true Christians, constraining them to tax their strength to the utmost, it should have a powerful restraining influence upon the ungodly. Those whom one sinner, directly or indirectly, corrupts and hardens—with the exception of some who may be arrested by grace in their mad career—will assist in corrupting others, and thus, through them and their posterity, he will be perpetually arrayed in hostility against his Maker, dragging many after him to the place of torment. How dreadful! how alarming! Think of this those of you, my readers, who are yet dead in sin, and who are either, directly or indirectly, destroying your children, and friends, and neighbours. Oh! think, you are preparing a host of rational, active beings, who, when your places are empty, will perpetuate the work of destruction you have begun, ruining, perhaps, in the course of ages, thousands and tens of thousands. And if you die as you are living, the moral injury you inflict and perpetuate will be visited in severe retribution on yourselves, as having to answer to God for each individual you corrupt, through the instrumentality of others, as well as for those you personally destroy; your punishment will go on increasing as long as one soul perishes, in whose ruin you were in the least degree concerned.

We would, lastly, enforce entire devotedness, from the shortness and uncertainty of human life.—The life of man is short and uncertain. Whatever be their character, all must soon die, yea, may die suddenly. And the Bible teaches that in life alone can pardon and peace be obtained. After death, no place for repentance will be found, although it be sought carefully and with tears;—after death, the sinner's doom is irrevocably sealed. There is no purgatory beyond the grave, in which sin can be washed away, and the imprisoned soul set free. The wicked go into everlasting punishment. Hence their only hope of deliverance from coming wrath hangs on the brittle thread of this mortal life. They must be saved in their lifetime, or sink at death into eternal despair. When this is the case, and when their continuance here is so precarious, with what promptitude should those who know their danger, and who themselves have been happily delivered therefrom, seek to effect their deliverance, and to save them from death? With what alacrity and indefatigableness should Christians labour to convert the ungodly, and to save them from undying wo, when the shortest delay, or the least remissness, may prove their ruin. In regard to the impenitent, the want of prompt exertion in their behalf is tantamount to destruction. *The neglected of to-day are often the lost of to-morrow.* How serious a consideration! When you think of it, Christian readers, should you either procrastinate or languidly engage in evangelistic work? When you think of it, should you not consecrate yourselves this day to the salvation of your perishing fellow-countrymen? When you think of it, should you not be up and doing to save as many of them as you can from irre-

mediable destruction? In regard to multitudes by whom you are surrounded, it is *now or never*; and, therefore, to let them alone for a day, is to leave them to perish. They are like individuals asleep, whose dwelling has accidentally ignited, and who, therefore, if they are to be preserved at all, must be instantly awakened. Delay to them is ruin. Fitted as this is to arouse the most inactive to energetic action, it is sadly neglected. Too many professors resemble in their conduct toward others, the conduct of a matron of whom we lately read, when her house was on fire. On the alarm being given, she became anxious about her property, and busied herself in running from apartment to apartment securing one article after another. Having, by intense labour, rescued a large portion of her furniture, the thought rushed into her mind that she had forgotten to look after one of her children, and she wildly exclaimed, O my child! The exclamation was followed by a diligent search for the missing infant, but it was too late, as the little one was consumed with the flames. In regard to the salvation of others, do not many who profess to love the Saviour, and to feel for souls, act similarly? They busy themselves with one thing after another, and allow their children and associates to live and die unconverted, and thus to be at last consumed amidst the quenchless flames of the bottomless pit. This conduct now may give them little concern, but there is a day coming when many a mother, in frantic despair, shall exclaim, O my child! and when many an individual, sorrowing for irreparable neglect, shall bitterly cry out, O my brother! O my friend!

The shortness and uncertainty of your own life, as

well as that of your careless neighbours, should stimulate you to instantaneous, unwearyed efforts for their good. The time you have for benefiting them, besides being at the longest short, is extremely uncertain. You have at most only a few fleeting years to work the work of Him who sent you into the vineyard. Moreover, you may die soon, yea, instantly; you may be cut off in the midst of your days and of your usefulness, and deprived of any future opportunity of doing good to your fellow-men. Should not this reflection impel you to labour in season and out of season, while it is called to-day. You may not be long privileged to labour, and, therefore, whatsoever your hand findeth to do, you should do it with your might. If this year you neglect to instruct the ignorant, and to warn the ungodly, you may not have it in your power to do so the next; and hence, without loss of time, you should put forth vigorous efforts in their behalf. One great reason why Satan is so intent on his labours of malignity is, doubtless, his knowledge of the limited period he has for carrying on his work of destruction. As we read in Revelation, "The devil is come down among men, having great wrath, knowing that his time is short." Although he is to be allowed to tempt mankind—except the time of the millennium be an exception, during which, at all events, his power of doing evil will be greatly diminished—till the end of the world, yet that period will soon elapse; and he is aroused, by its limited duration, to prosecute his infernal work with unremitting diligence. And if the comparative brevity of his reign moves him to be all the more assiduous in destroying souls, should not the shortness and precariousness of his reign move us to be all the more diligent in saving souls?

ousness of your lives arouse you to greater assiduity in saving them? Learn, then, from the archfiend, who beguiled Eve through his subtlety, and who never intermits his exertions to destroy all her offspring—oh! learn from him to improve the brevity of life. Work while it is called to-day, for the night cometh when no man can work. Work, yea, work earnestly and unremittingly, while your working time lasts, for you know not how soon it may come to a close—how soon it may please your heavenly Father to remove you from the sphere of active exertion, to enjoy the reward of your labours. Hear God saying to each of you, “Son, go work *to-day* in my vineyard;” and see that you give prompt compliance to his orders, as what you leave undone to-day you may not be spared to accomplish to-morrow. Is not your time passing rapidly onward, and may you not instantaneously be interrupted in your labours by the hand of death? Then, think earnestly, determine boldly, act quickly, labour energetically, like men who know the value of an hour, and who feel that every time they give a good advice and point the sinner to the Saviour, may be the last opportunity they shall have of doing any thing for Him whose they are, and whom they ought to serve,—counting all things as dross, compared with the advancement of that kingdom He came to establish, and which will one day be coextensive with the habitable globe.

Swayed by such considerations as have been adduced, may the writer indulge the hope that all his readers will, without delay, consecrate themselves to the service of the Lord? Be persuaded, every one of you

who know the truth, to live wholly for your Saviour, who loved you and gave himself for you. It is indeed strange, that Christians should do so little for him who has done so much for them, and who is providing mansions for them in the house of his heavenly Father. It is surpassing strange, that those who have been saved through his great atoning sacrifice, and who can entertain the hope of being glorified with him in the upper sanctuary, should be so negligent of their companions in guilt, whose salvation is intimately connected with his honour and glory. IN FACT, THE GREATEST MORAL WONDER IN THE WORLD IS THE INACTIVITY OF TRUE BELIEVERS. I do not much marvel at poor sinners despising offered mercy, for through corruption's power and Satan's subtlety they are spell-bound by sin, and ignorant of their own best interests ; but I do wonder, I am astonished beyond measure, at the man who has been arrested by grace, and brought to know the danger he has escaped, and the reality of purity and peace, taking so little interest in the salvation of others, and doing so little toward its accomplishment. Is not this singularly marvellous ? Is it not such as almost to surpass belief ? Oh ! how astonishing, that men who have been justified and sanctified—who have been snatched as brands from the burning, that they might rescue others—and who have a lively sense of the danger to which the wicked are exposed, and of the great price that has been paid for their redemption—how astonishing, we say, that men in these circumstances can dwell in the midst of perishing fellow-creatures, and put forth at best only some feeble, fitful efforts to save them from the yawn-

ing gulf, and to prepare them for the blissful seats of paradise ! This, we maintain, is the greatest moral marvel in the universe ; and yet, alas ! if there be even a sprinkling of Christians among us, *it is no less common than wonderful.*

Instead of doing almost nothing for others, we should imagine that believers would be consumed with zeal, that they would be apt to neglect their ordinary affairs in their eagerness to save souls from death, and to make them as happy as themselves. Yes ! enthusiasm was rather to be expected than frigidity and indifference, and assuredly it would be far more pardonable. “It is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing.” Yet burning zeal in the cause of Christ is extremely rare. You may see worldly zeal, and pharisaic zeal, and sectarian zeal, in abundance ; but, oh ! how seldom do you see Christian zeal in its highest, noblest, grandest exercise, among the followers of the meek and self-denying Saviour—how seldom do you see men under its irrepressible influence, praying, planning, toiling with their whole might to snatch the prey from the spoiler, and to hasten Messiah’s universal reign ! An enthusiast is almost as rarely beheld as the blazing comet, and his path, like its orbit, is marked in the estimation of the world with peculiar eccentricity. But why is this, when every Christian has professedly consecrated himself to the service of the Lord, when devotedness is so much needed, even to evangelize Britain, and when there are motives fitted to turn the whole body of believers, like the holy angels, into “flames of fire ?” O that the mantle of the prophets and apostles would fall upon a cold and lethargic church ! O that the Spirit

would kindle a holy enthusiasm in the heart of every British saint, compelling him to sympathize with the situation of his country, and to give himself to the conversion of his fellow-subjects with unconquerable energy! Away, my Christian countrymen, with all your coldness, and deadness, and dilatoriness—away with all your sectarian antipathies and paltry jealousies, and come, united, determined, and fearless, to your country's help, giving no sleep to your eyes, and no rest to your limbs, till this land of civil and religious liberty—this land which God has so signally honoured, and around which your affections are entwined—shall be wholly evangelized, and prepared for withstanding the convulsions and revolutions amidst which the latter-day glory is to be ushered in; yea, for sending forth, through manifold channels, the Word of life to the remotest corner of the habitable earth. We think we see a glorious day awaiting Great Britain—a day in which she is to be securely based on the pillars of religion—a day in which she is to be greater than ever in moral grandeur and moral influence—a day in which all her inhabitants are to breathe the spirit, and to wear the aspect, of saints; consecrating their time, and wealth, and energies, to the evangelization of foreign climes—a day in which she is to be ennobled by all that is pure, and lovely, and of good report; drawing toward her the wondering eyes of a wondering world, and receiving the blessings of the blinded African and the benighted Asiatic. But, if this anticipation is ever to be realized, prompt, persevering efforts must be made for the moral and spiritual elevation of the land; every Christian must know his post, and nobly occupy it; and all must labour earnestly, devotedly, unitedly,—praying

at the same time incessantly with all prayer, that the Great Ruler of the universe, who will have his servants always to associate dependence with exertion, would baptize them afresh with the Spirit, make them perfect in every good work to do his will, and crown their endeavours with triumphant success. Amen! Amen! Let all the people say, Amen.

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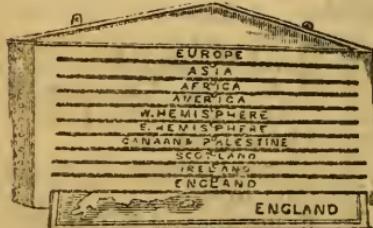
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